WITHDRAWN

FIELDS OF GLORY

RUSSELL H. CONWELL

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FIELDS OF GLORY

Fields of Glory

By
RUSSELL H. CONWELL, D.D.
Author of "Unused Powers" "Six Nights in the Garden of Gethsemane," "Acres of Diamonds," etc.

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Foreword

DR. CONWELL preaches, as a rule, to an audience of more than three thousand. The auditorium of the Baptist Temple contains 3,134 numbered opera chairs and, on Sunday evenings especially, is usually filled. In this large congregation are people from many parts of the world. Upon a recent Sunday evening, Japan, Korea, and several European countries were represented, as well as Texas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, North Dakota, and many near-by states. At the communion services, almost all denominations are present. At one such service were members of the Reformed, Presbyterian, Moravian, Christian, Episcopalian, Congregational, Methodist, Evangelical, and Lutheran churches, together with Friends and Hebrews.

The question is often asked, "How does Dr. Conwell prepare these sermons which make so wide and strong an appeal and which are so effective in bringing many to Christ?" for during his pastorate he has baptised 7,500 people.

One might say that Dr. Conwell does not prepare his sermons in the usual sense of the word. His work prepares them. He rarely makes an exhaustive "book" study of his subject. He may consult a few references as to dates or names or other statistical data. But the subject of the sermon and the incidents for illustrating it are largely drawn from his everyday work.

Dr. Conwell believes that the truths of the Gospel are applicable to present, everyday living. He tries to apply them to his own affairs. He tries to help others to apply them to theirs. So as he goes about his church, university and hospital work, for he is President of Temple University and of three hospitals, his themes for his sermons come to him and rarely, by Saturday night or Sunday morning, has he failed to get a thought for his Sunday's talks. He says that if he is doing God's work, the subjects will come, and that therefore the best way to secure texts for the Sunday sermons is to be busy about Christ's work. This may seem a bit theoretical, but it is a theory which in his case, at least, has proved practicable.

He sometimes takes with him into his pulpit, a card or scrap of paper upon which are

jotted down names or other data to be used as reminders. But he never writes a sermon out. His sermons are taken by a stenographer as they are delivered, and both prayer and benediction carry out and emphasise the main thought. In a few instances, when it was necessary to have the sermon in print simultaneously with its delivery, Dr. Conwell endeavoured to dictate in advance what he thought he would say. But it must be confessed, he seldom followed the outline given.

In one of the sermons in this book is perhaps the keynote of his appeal. "It is not the great preaching," he says, "it is not the theological discussions, it is not essays upon science, that save men. It is simply some suggestive thing, some thought, some word, some pressure of a hand, some look of an eye, or something that brings a man 'to himself.' For when brought 'to himself,' he ever worships God." These simple things, Dr. Conwell gleans day by day as he hurries about his work, and then prayerfully uses to help mankind see and serve God.

AGNES RUSH BURR.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Contents

I. Lilies of the Field . . . 11
Matthew 6:28

II. Pure Water 27
Luke 8:1-3

III. Transplanted Joys . . . 46
Luke 15:9

IV. The Great Untold . . . 64
John 14:2

V. Diverging Paths 80
Acts 13:1, 2

VI. The Worst and the Best . . 90
Song of Solomon 2:15

VII. A Sure Promise 104
II Corinthians 1:20

VIII. The Contrary Wind . . . 117
Matthew 14:24

IX. Love That Smites . . . 135
Exodus 20:20

X. The Race for Life . . . 149
Hebrews 12:2

I

LILIES OF THE FIELD

"Consider the lilies of the field how they grow."
—MATTHEW 6:28

WHO made the first seed from which all the successive generations of lilies have come? God. Hence every lily draws our mind back through the successive series of changes and cycles to the beginner, God. No one else could have made the first seed, whether the lilies be the combination of various previous forms or whether they have originated as variations from one independent seed. They all lead back to God, back to the only personality having the power to create such a thing as a living seed. Show me the man who can make a seed which, when planted in the ground, will produce a tree. Show me the animal that can do it independent of that inscrutable, outgoing "First Cause" called God. Then there may be room for discussion.

Some power must have made the first seed. Think of it! There must have been a first germ containing in itself the promise and potency of all future lilies. The lily I have today originated in a bulb. Back of it were others, back of them, still others. Others back of them! Others still, others, others, others! But all lead back to the first created one in the beginning. Who could have made that one first seed? God. "In the beginning, God."

When Jesus said, "Consider the lilies," He presented one of the sublimest thoughts that ever came to the attention of men. It brings up all the successive geologic changes of the world before the flowers were born, and then all the passing changes in the history of vegetation and of man, since they began to bloom. It brings up a wide field for meditation and logical study which cannot possibly be fully comprehended by any present human mind. It is a sublimity beyond sublimity, a mountain beyond a mountain, a heaven beyond a heaven, which is expressed through the appearance of lilies.

Jesus said, "Consider the lilies." Why? As we look into the bell of such a beautiful creation as a lily, we catch glimpses of the

magnificent panorama of the rolling ages. And if a lily could speak, if it could audibly express itself, you would hear in it the far-away echoes of the songs of the angels when creation's morning first did dawn. You would hear the rapping of the Titans whose hammers laid the foundations of the universe. You would hear the anthem of the morning stars. You would hear the lily speak from its white bell of all the wonderful things of God before it appeared upon the earth of which the geologists and astronomers get but a hint. You would hear the glad revels of the sons of God celebrating the birth of new worlds.

Jesus said, "Consider the lilies." Who said that? Jesus. The mightiest mind that has ever formed a concept. Hence it must be deserving of the attention of the wisest that they carefully consider the lilies. Jesus, the best heart, the purest mind, the noblest soul, the divine Son of God, commanded us to "consider the lilies." No better friend have we ever had than He, and His advice is important because of His friendship. No greater teacher has ever been in the world than He, and His advice is valuable for His divine wisdom. It was He who said, "Consider the lilies." So in obedience to His

divine command, we consider for a few minutes the lilies.

What does a lily teach of God? It teaches divine truth. It proves that God made the world. The infidel who looks into the face of a lovely lily and observes its blush and hears the suggestions connected with its utterances, and still says, "God did not make the world," must have a marvelously disarranged mind. "God made the world!" That truth in trumpet-tones comes forth from the bell of a lily. "God made the world! God made the world!" You ask me how it proclaims that? Because, as I have already said, every lily must have originated with some power which is superhuman. No human being could have made the first seed from which the lilies came, and consequently there must have been a divine power making the world at its creation. It is true of lilies. It is also true of azaleas. It is also true of the trees of the field. It is also true of the grasses. It is also true of mankind. It is true of every living thing and of every inanimate production. "God made the world!" And if a lily were asked to utter with its bugle notes the best message it could bring, it would send out into the world, echoing from ocean to ocean the

declaration, "God made me. I originated in the mind of Jehovah."

Then the lily teaches that this world of God's is a beautiful world, a lovely thing. I do not wish to go to heaven now because I find that this world is still lovely. I find that this world is very sweet. I find in this world a great deal of love and of joy. I have found that there are more good people than bad. I have found that there is more joy than sorrow. I have found that there is more sunshine than shadow, far more pleasant days than stormy ones. This world is a garden of God. It is God's conservatory. He planted these things. Man could not have produced them. He has spread over this world such wonderful vegetation that we are living in a veritable Eden. But much depends upon how we "consider" it. Eden was itself no Eden to Eve after she had sinned. The blossoms were just as brilliant, the trees were just as fruitful, everything was just as delightful in itself after she sinned as before. But it was not a garden to her any longer. It was God's garden still. It had not changed. But she had changed. A great deal depends on how people take this world, whether it is a garden of God to them or not.

But as we "consider the lilies," it enforces the lesson that this world is a garden of God, full of beauty, truth and love. He plants a great many flowers in it that you and I do not see. There are myriads of flowers upon which no human eye ever rested. It is God's garden and He has planted it, and He admires it, and He sees it if we do not. There are unseen flowers over all this world that some day we may know and appreciate, though we do not now. A lily speaking to us from its mouth of sweetness, expressing with its cheeks of loveliness, and suggesting with its brilliant eyes of beauty, sayeth unto you and me that there are many more things in this wonderful world than we have yet enjoyed. There are ten thousand beautiful flowers you have never seen which you might have seen, sweetest impressions of holiness that you have never felt, widespreading experiences which you have never approached. This world is full of joy and happiness, is full of beauty, full of brightness, but we do not see it, but yet we might see it, for blossoming all around us are trees of fascinating beauty and flowers of glory. A lily tells us that we are God's creatures and are placed on this earth where there are flowers that men do not

see. If a lily does not speak to you of love and joy, if it does not make your heart beat more quickly or make the brain act with greater energy, it is because you have lost this truth that there is a wide field of Christian experience into which you have not entered, flowers and beauties you have not touched. If church be dull, religion tiresome, then you have not appreciated God's spiritual garden. There are no less flowers, but less appreciation.

The most important utterances of a lily are found in connection with what it teaches concerning man, his duties and destinies. It teaches us that all complete animate or inanimate things are but the expression of God's thoughts. A wonderful, worshipful poet was he who said that flowers are God's thoughts. God thought a lily. Lo, from the seed appeared a lily! It came and expressed God's thought. God thought a daisy and lo, the daisy came. He thought azalea and lo, an azalea bloomed. He thought pinks, and pinks unfolded. Every one of these flowers exhibits God's thought. God thought of these before they were made, just as the building is thought out by the architect before it is constructed. This lily teaches us that not only is

every lily a thought of God, but that it expresses the divine Giver's taste. Would God be satisfied with a humanly made lily? Would God be satisfied with a rose made of paper? Would God be satisfied with any structure that you could analyse with the microscope or that could be analysed chemically and a fault be discovered in it? Is there in the texture of a lily the slightest error? Is not every line arranged with perfect geometrical nicety? Are not colours united with a harmony no artist could approach? The more closely you examine a lily, the more beautiful it is. Like God, the Bible and the Saviour, the more closely you examine lilies, the more perfect they become to you. God sent you the flowers and they express the donor's thought and taste. By them you can see what is God's taste. He made them and we are commanded to consider them. He sends them to you as some friend would send a flower into your sick room and it expresses the giver's affection.

It also expresses the giver's power. For it is marvelous in its structure. It is black, offensive, decaying matter changed into living purity. It is life from death, light from darkness.

I want to tell you what a lily teaches of man. It urges humility. Where do the lilies grow? Do they grow upon the mountains? Not there. Do they grow amid the magnificent cedars whose branches are so wide-spreading? Not there. With the beautiful, arched maple? Not there. They grow among the lowly where the grasses are coarse and unobserved, and the land is wet, where man's feet would seldom go but for some unusual attraction. This teaches man the merit of humility. Consider the lilies and be humble like them.

They teach man purity. Could there ever be a suggestion more divinely filled with light than the lily? Purity! Purity! The Christian heart should be pure, the Christian life should be pure, and they may be pure even under disagreeable surroundings. Where does the lily of the field grow? Always among the coarser, ruder, rougher classes of plants. You may be a Christian lily and have all the purity of heaven's own sunshine and yet dwell among the coarsest and rudest companions.

The lily teaches that it gains its beauty, its breath, its life from being rooted in another life. No man may hope to grow in grace

unless he is rooted in God's life. Separate the root of the lily from the life that is under and around it and it fades and dies. So the Christian who separates himself from association with this beautiful spirit of God immediately wilts and fades away and must die unless he restores his relation to it.

It teaches us that God cares for His children. Yonder sun that shines upon us is millions of miles from here. Just think of it! The lilies are cared for by the sun millions of miles away. The sun has sent its rays all that distance, one after another, to build up the humble lily. The lily without sunshine could not have grown, but with it, it has blossomed into a wonderful exhibition of God's power. God Himself seems to you to be distant, but He is sending His communications to you from heaven like the rays of the sun with every passing moment. You are not unobserved. God cares for you.

A lily teaches also the fact that we, having that care, should trust in God. We should trust Him. Jesus Himself saith that these bodies of ours are more marvelous than the lilies of the field, more wonderfully wrought, more strikingly combined, that the understanding of them is more difficult than the

analysis of the lily. He says, "If your heavenly Father careth for the lilies of the field, how much more will he care for your more marvelously made human bodies."

The lily teaches us bravery. This flower grows where other flowers will not grow. It grows where the desert with its hot sands touches the very edges of its roots. This flower grows in the dark, muddy seams of the lowest swamps of the world. It is brave enough to shine alone where other white blossoms dare not. I have often been over my father's fields seeking for lilies in the early springtime. I never found them where other flowers grew. We find them lifting their pure bells where everything is rude and harsh. They are brave enough to let themselves be seen where other flowers dare not appear. They teach us bravery.

Did you ever think how useful the lily is? Consider the lily and its usefulness. What has made this world capable of producing fruit? God planted a seed, it may have been of the lily, and that seed began to work with its roots to pulverise the rocks that other flowers might grow around it. The lily spreads its leaves and petals over these rising little plants around it and shelters them. Not

only does it do that, but it brings moisture to the dry land which is necessary not only for itself but for others. If you cover the field with lilies, you will find moisture there. It brings moisture as well as seeks moisture, and when the songster of Solomon said that the Beloved was like a hart that fed among lilies, he expressed the idea that he dwelt there where the soil was made rich by the working of the lilies, made fertile by the lilies' roots toiling all the time, preparing the world to be covered with other flowers and other grasses. Other grasses would not produce their rich vegetation but for the industrious foresight of the lily species. Christian character like that is useful and makes a place for others to grow and waters them, until they, too, begin to blossom.

The lily is worthy of being considered also because it teaches what the Bible also enforces, to render good for evil. People say, "I cannot do that." Then they are unnatural. All nature's teachings give that exhortation. Visit the sick room where lies the dear patient. She is suffering and throwing off from her lungs a poisonous substance which vitiates the air which you and she must breathe. You are sadly saying, "She is going

to her death." You say, "She is growing worse day by day." But take a lily into that sick room and notice the very first thing it does. It takes in the poison and gives out a healthy atmosphere. And there is not a safer process of purification in the world than to put such plants in such a sick room. All of us country boys know their usefulness in protecting from miasma. They grow in the lowlands where people would otherwise be afflicted terribly with fever. But fill the lowland with lilies and no fever will be found there because they take the evil and give out the good, render good for evil everywhere they appear.

The lily cheers. Oh, yes it cheers! Put a rose alongside of your bed when you are sick or put a white lily there and let it look right squarely into your eye. Does not the lily give a cheerful expression and make you happy? It is more than kindness to send a flower to the sick person. You send a flower and you not only thus convey your own ideas of sympathy, but you also send by its encouraging cheer health, positive health.

This flower utters words of wonderful cheer, and oh, it speaks so touchingly of God. It speaks of Christ. It speaks of human

friendship and everything delightful. Sit there upon your invalid chair, or lie in your bed, and look into the bell of the lily and you must grow cheerful. It is no surprise to me that a man was saved from being insane in a French prison when a plant began to grow upon the dungeon walls. It is not wonderful to me that Dr. Livingstone was saved from death by seeing a plant on a sandy desert. It was a lily. It grew where no other plant would grow, but indicated that there was water below which led him to the conclusion that he must be nearing a region of vegetation. Although he was ready to faint and die, when he detected the lily he said, "I am nearer to succor than I supposed," and he pressed on until the oasis welcomed him.

It is one of the most blessed things about a lily that it gives forth an unconscious perfume. People say, "I try to live a Christian life yet there is no need of my joining the church. I try to express Christian morality. But there is no need of my joining the church." They forget that the greatest influence of the Christian is the unconscious one, the influence of his example, the influence of his position, the silent influence he sends forth, just as the plant unconsciously

sends forth its beauty and perfume. The number of souls saved by prayer in the prayer meetings, the souls directed to God by exhortation, although these are both excellent ways, is small compared with the vast number who are going to heaven's gates influenced by the silent example of Christians.

Then these lilies must die. Last year there was a sorrowful funeral of a sweet lily. I see again its stalk. I see its bells. I see them slowly fading, fading, fading. I see the leaves falling, the stalk becoming bare. I see it curling, crumbling, shivering and falling, and at last the lily is dead, and its funeral service is performed by brilliant but silent angels and the poor lily is no more. But lo, today, upon the same spot is another lily, and science tells us it is the same lily risen again. This flower teaches the last and most important lesson I can refer to among the million lessons the lily does teach, namely, immortality. It died, we said. But in truth it was not dead. Here it is again. The spring has come and the father sun has sent its rays down, and mother earth has given her succor, and here is a heavenly lily blossoming in its marvelous attractiveness today. It is the same life. It died last year. We are lilies. We, too, are

immortal. We will go down to the earth as the lily goes down, and spring again to life in the resurrection time. The lily returns to us in the beautiful resurrection of the spring-time and thus leads our mind upward to the resurrection of Christ, to the eternal springs of God. Our lilies may die but they will grow again. Our friends may disappear but in the spring of that glorious dawn in that morning land, they shall blossom. Yea, they shall blossom and bloom forever in the immortal beds of God's heavenly garden under His perpetual summer. They shall never die there. They cannot die there. Oh, my friends, you will do well to "consider the lilies" and get from them a thousand lessons I do not have time to present.

II

PURE WATER

"And the twelve were with him, and certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance."—LUKE 8: 1-3.

I WANT to direct your special attention to the clause in the text which reads, "Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils."

From the west bank of the Hudson River above the Highlands, the traveller looks westward up to the magnificent Catskill Mountains. They are scarce four thousand feet above the level of the sea, yet like some men in times of mediocrity, their situation is such as to present a magnificent spectacle whether they be viewed from the shore of the river or from the distant plains of the north.

That is classical ground. Washington Irving made it so with his folklore stories of early days, and there in its dells Rip Van

Winkle is said to have slept away his twenty years. It is a beautiful spot. Fine waterfalls in the spring thunder and shake the massive mountains as they crash down the precipitous ravines, and in the summer time rivulets of sylvan beauty fall from sixty to one hundred feet over frequent cascades. The mountains themselves are still as wild as they were in the early years. The wild beasts and the wild fowl are still found in their glades and fastnesses. The trees there have grown tall for hundreds of years, and in the protection of their shade and the life-giving perfume of their balsam, many a weary and unhealthy traveller has found rest and strength. It is one of the favourite resorts of health-seeking tourists from all parts of the world, and when I refer to it in illustration, I must be striking directly into the experience of many hundreds.

Up in the glens of those mountains on the westerly side, there begins a little stream of water. In fact, there are two streams, twin streams, that originate not far apart. They begin so imperceptibly and so quietly, so mysteriously, in such a modest, pure, tiny drop, that no man can put his finger on the source of their fountains. They seem to come

out of the solid rock, like nectar expressed by Jupiter's hand into the jewelled cup of the gods. One trickles down over many feet of massive, rocky ledge which seems to be an impervious rock with no opening from whose pores water can come, and yet there that stream begins, and as it gurgles from rock to rock, it is a marvel of beauty in the bewitching reflections of the flashing sunlight. At certain seasons of the year in the spring, it is said there is for some days a perpetual phantom play of rainbows in the mountains at the source of that pure brooklet. Then it falls into the leaves, into the shadows, and it is lost under larch, cedar and hemlock, to sight and search. But out it leaps in jolly, innocent sport, and trickles on over the rocks, over the mosses, through the ferns, under the braided roots of the trees, sliding down through nature's richly carved channels in its gayety and jollity, leaps to the pool and into the little lake, making the leaves tremble with laughter and shed dewy tears of joy. Then over further cascades down to the plain it goes, making the woodlands musical with maidenly song that sweeps out at last into a mighty oratorio of praise.

Then it becomes slightly muddy. Soon it

winds its way through the meadows, gathering its force for another and wilder leap, and then dashes out over cascades, over boulders, thundering with the consciousness of strength, each barrier and boulder making it braver, until it strides forth from the massive débris of rocky shackles, calm, majestic and gigantic. And in passing, it opens broad paths, clear-cut through the lower stratas, and becomes the great, dignified, deep-flowing, silent river. But back where it opens for the first time into the meadows of life, there comes in the other stream, less observed, coming sweetly in without much display, not many thundering cascades, not many falls of beauty, or rainbows; but at last it comes in, like the abashed bride who has awaited the bridegroom's glorious train, and the twin rivers unite to form the Delaware River, and roll on as one to the distant sea.

Yet all the way down from the icy snows of the Catskill Mountains, the twin brooklets gather colouring matter as they flow, and take up into their pure water, contaminating influences, even from the spot where one first trickled over the magnificent ledges. At first, it is clear as the air, as pure as the polished diamond, and as transparent as the

sun's rays. But as it comes through the woods, it gathers colouring matter, and as it goes through the moss, through the leaves, through the roots, through the grasses, it collects extraneous minerals. It gathers the sticks, stumps and dregs of many a pool. It goes to join its twin river, hoarding leaves, branches, rocks, sand, dust, iron, quartz, all mingled together, all colouring its waters. The farther it goes, the deeper its colouring, until at last it reaches a point at certain times of the year when no man who is rowing in a boat can see the bottom. He knows not how deep it is, this slow-rolling river. It is so thick with floating contamination, he is unable to fathom it.

Another river like unto it intersects the Delaware in Philadelphia. It is the Schuylkill, and though the Schuylkill rises in different conditions altogether, the fountains at its headquarters are pure, as pure as those of the Delaware. But they soon, within a hundred feet of their source, begin to mingle with the iron rust and the drainings of the coal mines and all the colouring substance of decaying vegetation, and after these little streams which make up the river have gone but a few hundred feet from their source, they are no

longer pure and are greatly discoloured. When they reach the open plains, then the farm lands, the manufacturing plants and the cities pour their poisons into these streams that make the river, and when it has received all that filth, all that drainage, and all those offscourings, that river becomes a flowing mass of the dregs and sins of the people.

You will ask why I find in these rivers and their course anything to illustrate this text. Because I seldom think of Mary Magdalene without thinking of the highest brooks of the Delaware. One of them is so like the brook that washes still the broken foundations of the tower at Magdala on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Her life must have been so like that. I do not think that I could better fasten your thoughts to the text than by this description.

Mary Magdalene was born on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. She was not born in poverty, not born in the slums. She was not surrounded by the vicious. As a girl she was not clothed in garments of rags and filth, nor was she surrounded by special wickedness. She seems to have been born of a family well to do, and she inherited wealth which we are told she used in ministering to the Saviour in

after years. She seems to have lived in a beautiful spot on the shores of the blue Galilee, a sea similar to the lakes in the Catskills, though much larger in extent. She was like the mountain scenery. She was raised in the mountains. The trees were spreading, they were handsomer, those tropical trees, than the pine, the chestnut, the beech, of the Catskills. There grew there the more beautiful oleander, the more magnificent olive, the more fruit-producing fig. There Mary Magdalene lived in her early days.

If you have seen a little innocent girl running about in childish gaiety, her eyes flashing, full of delicious interest in every movement, inspired by grace, every action one of innocence, every thought that of purity, living in a home of beauty, could you find anything better illustrated than is that life by the headwaters of the Delaware River? Such was the life of Mary Magdalene. But as that girl goes on down the record of life's history, she met what every soul sent into this world meets, tempting circumstances, colouring surroundings. It is part of the lot of fallen man, the philosophy of which few of us understand, that man should meet with these temptations, that he should have in his life in

consequence of deleterious conditions, these influences, these temptations. Poor Mary Magdalene gave way to them. I know not all her history. But there are women who may read these lines who will feel something of this story if they look back on their own life. They began in childhood with those same good surroundings, those friends, those teachings, that inclination to do right, that resolution that sinfulness should not enter their heart. Then they met with sinful friends, as Mary Magdalene did, and just as the little stream takes in the side rivulet from among the dead leaves, as their life has flowed down toward the eternal sea, they have taken into their life men and women, as Mary Magdalene did, whose influence contaminated their pure life. Their life is not childlike any more. Neither was hers. We read here that Christ cast out of her seven devils, which is an expression conveying the thought that she was very bad. From the way it is mentioned, and the life of the woman afterward, we are led to believe she had been very wicked, though there is nothing in the Scriptures to designate what her crimes were. It may be inferred from the sincerity of her repentance and her following life that she had been a

wicked woman, though we cannot say what her sins were. It is not an unusual experience for people to become insane from sin.

As a little girl her first temptation may have been of dress, and that coloured her innocent life like a sun-darkening cloud over the flowing stream of life's history. Through the pride of dress taught by her parents, the innocent childhood is destroyed. As soon as she begins to see that her dress is too short or too long, and that her ribbons are too bright or too dark, as soon as she finds out that her bonnet is too big or too little, that her laces are not so rich as those of another, as soon as she becomes conscious of pride of dress, of compliments, of hatred of criticism,—and the compliments are often said to the face and the criticisms behind the back,—she then becomes conscious of shame and sin. She has done something in this matter of dressing which has turned her mind away from the independent, beautiful innocence of her early childhood. Then she awoke to her pride of family and to her pride of money. Then she came in under the dark shadows of the ever-surrounding trees of evil. As she leaped on from one place to another, accumulating volume, she rushed from field to field, from sin

to darker sin, until at last her whole life was obscured with shadows and stained by the sins of past experiences. She was insane.

What is it to be insane? Insane! Oh, sadness, sadness! Language has no expression for the lips to command to tell of the sad condition of an insane mind. Some are insane from an inherited insanity, others because of one cause or another. But many are insane because of the very cause we attribute to Mary Magdalene. She was insane as a result, we may suppose, of experiences, by the aggravated forces of the evil of her past life. And yet where did she become insane? Friends, where did this little rivulet that floats by the city and bears great ships on its dark bosom and carries now such large quantities of mud to the sea, where did it begin to change its colour? None can accurately tell. But we say it is a very muddy stream, especially at high water. Where did it get its mud? The place is difficult to locate, and it is as difficult to locate with certainty where a person begins to be insane. As soon as a girl thinks more of ribbons than of her supper, she is partially insane; more of having the name than the actual merit, she is somewhat insane. Where does a girl begin to be in-

sane? We men do not know, you women do. Where does a man begin to be insane? You men and I know. It is when he begins to do foolish things which are inconsistent with the dictates of ordinary common sense. Who about us, then, are fully sane?

When a man burns up money smoking cigarettes, unmindful of the consequences, knowing how often it causes cancer, as it has done with a friend of mine, you say that man was a fool to smoke cigarettes. There are accounts in the paper every week of boys being killed by smoking cigarettes. And you say, "Oh, yes, I heard of that. But it didn't occur to me that it would affect me that way. It didn't occur to me when I felt that stinging sensation in my throat that it was a cancer." This friend said, "I must have been insane anyhow. I know better than to smoke cigarettes." He looks back and sees where he lost his senses and then began to be insane.

It must have been so in the history of Mary Magdalene when she began to give way to foolish sins, when she lost social standing, lost her friends, lost her good name, lost her complacency of mind, lost her innocence and purity of spirit, until she lost her conscience, and by that time she was insane. You say, "Lost

her conscience. Can a man lose his conscience?" Yes. And a great many do. The conscience is like a court in a town in Tennessee during the Civil War. When the war began, the people of Tennessee were divided in sentiment between the North and the South. The State did not go either way. Some of the men enlisted in the Northern and others in the Southern army, and in one town, one side had the Justice of the Court, and the other side had the sheriff. The Sheriff said, "I will not carry out the Justice's instructions. I will not arrest any one on his order, and I will not put any one in prison he sentences, and I will not serve any execution that he issues." So the Judge sat on the bench passing judgments, and when he ordered a man to prison, the Sheriff said he would not obey the mandate.

And he did not. So the judgments of the court were not enforced. The paper signed by the Judge and given to the officer was not executed. By and by, the Judge became weary and he said, "If my orders are not executed, what is the use of my delivering an opinion?" And at last, he did not give any more decisions. He broke up the court, locked up the court house, and went away.

Afterward I went there for the purpose of carrying orders for establishing a provost-marshal's office, and a military Judge was sent there. He had many officers to serve his decrees, and he had plenty of bayonets to enforce obedience to those decrees. As soon as the people found out that there was law and power to enforce the law, then the decrees of the court began to be respected and once more the court of justice was established there.

Now in every man's breast there sits a judge. One who is almost infallible, one that is pure and that is almost immaculate, in the human breast, a dignified, upright judge, he sits there and makes his decrees. He says this is right and that is wrong. He commands the man to carry out his decisions, and if the man begins to refuse to carry out the judge's decree and disobeys the judge's mandate, the judge gets weary of giving decisions and becomes less and less likely to make any decisions at all, and at last ceases to make them at all, and so the man is left without a court. But if the time comes when he will enforce the decisions, then the conscience will be restored. I say from the moment a man begins to break down his

conscience, then from that moment he begins to be insane. Then he is overthrowing his own court.

If you saw a man sitting on a limb and he was sawing that limb off between himself and the tree, you would say that he was foolish. But he is not half so foolish as that person who stifles the dictates of conscience, who sins today knowing there is a double pain to follow every single joy.

Mary Magdalene, like the stream, gathered more and more of the dust, of the dirt, of the wretchedness of sin. She went down the stream of life sinning until her life was entirely disgraceful. She could not depend upon conscience as it refused to give any judgments. Her own mental judgments had failed altogether, and poor Mary was found of Christ when she was leading a wandering life, hiding in the tombs, perhaps sneaking into caves. She was dirty, ragged, without care, without home, and horribly haunted by devils, there being no asylum for the care of the insane. What a picture of wretchedness is Mary Magdalene, who has become insane directly in consequence of her having given way to the evil associations which led to her sinful life, until at last reason itself deserted

its throne, and the devil set up a riotous anarchy in its place.

I have here some pure water. This is not like that water that comes to us through our great rivers, which contains so much mud and sewage, but it is the water as it flows out of the rock at the headwaters of the Delaware River. If I put into this clear, pure water little grains of the substance which I hold in my hand, you notice that the water begins to darken, and then becomes darker, and here, as in the human life, as in the oncoming stream as it flows down from the Catskill Mountains, it becomes more and more blackened, until illustrative of human life, this water which was so pure, is gathering all the time from this substance deeper and deeper contamination until you now see it is black like ink. Human life is like that. Into it is dropped from extraneous sources these sinful ideas and inclinations, whisperings of the carnal mind, until it becomes as dark as this fluid before you. All its beauty has been taken away. It becomes very much the colour of the mud in the streams.

I would fasten this truth on your mind by clasping it with daily experience which you cannot forget. The sinful life is like the dark

stream. It becomes darkened and blackened with the seven devils. I wish I had time to define the seven devils for you. They have come into other men and women. There are seven devils following every man and woman, blackening and darkening in every contagious opportunity. But God can purify the great stream of the sinner's life and can make it as pure as the shining sun which shines on the river's headwaters. God can purify and He only.

You can go into the darkest cell where the worst criminal is confined and, even there, that heart can be redeemed. The change may not instantly make that life a good one or make that man at once to be like one who has loved and served God for years. But it will instantly turn that life back toward beauty and love of light, as this grain I now drop into this water will turn it back to its former beauty. Christ's blood dropped into the heart of the wickedest man will soon begin that process of reversal. It will not always change it instantaneously in one sense, but it will begin the change, as this water changes.

Mary Magdalene had seven devils, and after they were cast out we have the strong-

est proof of this fact that she was completely changed. She was a completely regenerated woman. Did you ever think of the terrible trials to which Mary was subjected? She was an insane patient, and you would naturally think that such a person after she had been restored to her right mind should be kept from all excitement and trouble. If you go to the insane asylums, those in charge will tell you that great care must be exercised in the prevention of excitement. But there is no grief greater than to witness the crucifixion of a loved one, no joy more brain-wrecking than to receive such an one back from the grave. But her mind wavered not. The doctors tell me there is no force like that of Christianity to redeem the insane. Women and men are made insane by borrowing trouble, by disappointments, by loss of love, loss of property, a mental strain, and the effect of those losses and disappointments, those trials, has been to unbalance the mind, and they become insane. But to a heart entirely changed, to a heart which has received Christ within itself, to a heart which, like this water, has received within itself the elements of truth, comes a calmness unutterable and a clearness like the crystal. The heart relieved from the

blackness of its sins is at rest. The mental warfare ends.

I go to the bedside of a person very sick and I pray with her, and she believes in prayer, and she lies back and says, "I have made up my mind now. I will trust in God and I will borrow no more trouble, and I will lie down and sleep. The Lord's will be done." Thus relieved of the strain, the effect of the decision on the system is such that it begins immediately to change, and the physical system is restored, and the brain restored, because the anxiety has been removed by the trust in God. And nothing but Christianity can take away from the heart that borrowing of trouble which leads to insanity. It makes people sane. If such persons trusted in Christ as they should, they certainly would not be insane, as there would be no trials. No matter how dark their life might seem to be, they would hold back and say, "Jesus doeth all things well." And if they found that life did not immediately grow brighter, the heart not more godly, not more at peace, they would come and ask God for the spirit to come and cleanse them more fully, and then, having God's spirit, an immediate change of heart would come. Thus the heart

itself shall become pure. It shall grow purer and purer with every passing hour until as this water now changes you will see that the heart of man, like that of Mary Magdalene, will change. The stream of sinful life becomes transformed, peaceful, helpful, pure. God can change the waters of the sinful life. But man himself cannot. There is one hope, one process, and one only. God will make the change.

III

TRANSPLANTED JOYS

"Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost."—LUKE 15:9.

JESUS again and again impressed upon His hearers that if they would make earth like heaven, it would be necessary for them to save the lost. I think that is heaven's chiefest joy because it was Christ's chiefest joy. He impressed it with such emphasis, upon those who heard Him, that they went forth "for the joy that was set before them" to save the lost.

One of the most touching and sweetest things He has ever said in illustration of the Gospel is the recitation of that little incident with reference to the lost sheep. The ninety-nine at home, the one lost away in the mountains! The shepherd will seek for the lost until he has found it, and when he throws it across his shoulders and brings it back through the storm, he rejoices. Christ represents that joy to be the highest and best hap-

piness that the human heart can ever feel, whether in this world or out of this life. I believe that heaven's highest joy is in the saving or the recovery of the lost, because it was God's chief desire when He sent His Son into the world. Jesus said, "I came to save that which was lost," and when He opened heaven to view, with instructions concerning the disciples' work, He said to them that the "angels in heaven do rejoice over one sinner that repenteth," over one soul that was lost and recovered. He told them that impressive story concerning the prodigal son. He represented him at home after his wanderings and repentance. He presents that domestic picture of the great joy at home, the sound of music and dancing, the exhibitions of pleasure on every side, because the lost was found. "This my son which was lost is found."

When young, I lived in the hills where the farmers kept many sheep. It was in a section of the country where nothing but sheep appeared to thrive, as they seemed to be the only animals that could get between the rocks. Often our sheep wandered away from the fold. I remember, as one of the first things of my boyish experience, being out late into the night, and starting with the light of

the morning again, to look for a lamb that was the special pet of my little sister. She could not sleep, and that night was the longest night she ever passed. Early in the morning, at the first ray of dawn, her feet were pattering around as she was waiting anxiously for us to start once more in search of that little lamb. When at last we found it away off in the woods, lost and hungry, and with its woolly clothing fearfully torn by the brambles, bushes and rocks over which it had wandered, I shall never forget my father's delight. He took the lamb up in his arms, carried it along hastily, and I had to run to keep up with him. When he brought the lamb into the house and laid it down before my sister, it presented a small picture of that heavenly joy which they feel who have lost and found.

And when Jesus would present a picture of heaven, He said to them, "It is like unto a woman who hath lost a valuable jewel, a piece of money of great value, and when she found it, she called all her friends and said, 'Rejoice with me for that which was lost is found.' " I regard it as the highest attribute of heaven, because the Bible so often speaks about it and because there is no greater pleasure than to have recovered joys.

Heaven is pictured in the Scriptures as a restoration of blooming beauty. Somewhere, I was once told of an old daguerreotype which had faded until nothing but the glass appeared to the naked eye. But it was taken to a distinguished chemist in the city of New York who had advertised that he could restore such things if they were not too faded, and when that daguerreotype was returned to the house, lo, it had changed its form to an oil painting which presented the features and form of the person taken in the old daguerreotype so accurately, that every friend would exclaim with astonishment as the familiar features appeared before him. It was a joy to have that face restored to the family, and all the circle gathered around to look upon grandma's dear old face. The daguerreotype was the only thing that remained of her, and the joy which that united family felt when they looked at that daguerreotype was a kind of premonition or hint of that higher experience which is promised to them that love Christ when they meet the old faces again.

I once stood in that old building in Milan where Da Vinci's magnificent painting of the Lord's Supper is spread along the wall in a room that was used as a stable, and where

rude and iconoclastic hands had roughly cut a door right through the picture. I could not see anything especially attractive about the picture, and I turned away from it thinking it was hardly worth spending our time upon. I saw the reproductions of that painting by artists who had been studying it and copying it. Gazing upon the reproduction, it filled the heart, filled the mind, with a sense of sublimity until one was entranced. Looking upon the apostles and into the face of the beloved Christ, one seemed to hear Him say, "Drink ye all of it." The restoration of valuable paintings in olden times gave greater joy to those who did it than did the original painting itself to the artist. Heaven, as I picture it, is often a reproduction of that which here hath faded out.

When I was a lawyer, in Boston, I remember seeing a will which had been written in a certain kind of ink which had faded until the paper seemed to be pure white. But it was submitted to a chemist who, after manipulation, brought it into the court for our examination. Lo, every line was clear and distinct! There could not be any mistake about that will, and upon it depended the fate of several orphans. When the lines returned again and

became clear and distinct, then their rights were made sure and their rejoicing was great. The lost was recovered.

They tell, in Sweden, a very delightful story concerning an angel who came down to receive the soul of a dying child, and as the two were passing upward on their way to heaven, the child noticed in the angel's hand a little rose tree of living green and in blossom. The child said to the angel, "Why are you taking that rose tree?" "Ah," said the angel, "it was once a little flower and adorned the room of an invalid child, and the child's heart loved that flower next to its mother, and now the child has come to heaven and is separated from that flower and desires it restored. So I am taking it up to bloom in heaven." The child said, "Why do you load yourself down with material things when you dwell in the bright streets of God?" The angel turned to the child and said, "I am that little crippled child and this plant was mine."

Heaven seems to be the blossoming out of roses that faded here. It seems to be taking up and making permanent the joys that passed in a moment here. It seems that Christ would picture it ever as the restoration of lost joys.

When the Pilgrim Fathers came across the seas, they brought with them only the necessities of life. But when they had encamped on the barren rock at Plymouth and erected their humble homes, one little girl found among the furniture some seeds of flowers that grew in their old home in England. She planted one little seed, and when the first leaf appeared the old and young gathered around and they saw the development of its beauty, and when it blossomed out, it was a plant from the old land. It was the only flower of the kind in this country. And it grew luxuriantly in the gardens of England. They gathered around it and sang praises to God for the flower they had unwittingly brought across the ocean. I suppose heaven's joy consists largely of transplanted joys, of roses that bloomed and faded, or roses that failed here and which blossom there.

The Scriptures seem to present heaven to us in such a light as to show us that it consists to us of the faded beauties here reproduced there. I remember, as we were going up the side of the Himalaya Mountains in Northern India, seeing an artist who had been waiting there all night, and when we talked with him we found that he had been so delighted with

the sunset from these magnificent peaks of snow that he had decided to stay there in a little hut and see the morning. When that artist looked upon the glowing, setting sun; when, with all its crimson and gold, with all its shining glory, with all its imitations of heaven's towers, with the flashing of the swinging gates of heaven itself, he gazed upon this setting sun and its glories overriding the embattlements of gold, he said as it faded, "I will turn my back upon the sunset now and wait for its reproduction in the morning."

We see the sunset glows of this world of ours and then, if we wisely turn our back upon earth's sunsets and face the morning world, looking then for the morning, the rising sun shall come with the gold, the red, the crimson, the yellow, the blue, making magnificent combinations until the heavens glow with rainbow light. It shall come again. This is the light of heaven. There is not a joy on earth, there is not a thing that brings you treasure here that is permanent, that is pure, but it shall be lastingly reproduced in heaven. That is the teaching of Scripture. Heaven consists of restored values that have been destroyed here but have a resurrection there.

When I was but a little boy, one of the first books I remember reading was *Robinson Crusoe*. I remember weeping over his shipwreck all alone with no food that belonged to civilised lands. But when I found him shaking out that little handful of grain, and read how he sowed it, fenced it in, watched it, developed it, gathered that grain the first season and then sowed it the next, I felt as intensely as did he when he watched on that desert island the reproduction of the buds from home.

Heaven itself is the restored values of that which has been lost here. In the harbour of Boston, a diver went down for some purpose to the bottom of the sea and while searching for something—I do not remember what—he found a little packet and in that packet some jewels. They had been lost overboard by an accident in the harbour. When he opened it by the light of the sun, he found the name upon the jewelry, and in the city directory, the addresses, and took them to the very people and laid the jewels that had been under the sea for six years right on their table again. Imagine the curiosity, the pleasure and the joy at the recovery of those gifts that had come down as heirlooms in the family,

doubly valuable now. The most valuable things ever on earth are those things that have a restored value.

A man wrote to me a short while ago that he owned a piece of land in a Western state and had abandoned it because the mines had given out. Not long ago, however, he discovered another mine. The town began to grow and soon that very spot on which he had pitched his tent and erected his former hut became of such value that he wrote to me to secure some place for his children to attend a college in the East. He had almost forgotten that he had any such piece of land, yet the thing which he had lost, that which was least of value in his eyes, really became in its restored value the greatest benefactor of his life.

In heaven, some of the richest experiences we have will be when those joys are reproduced about which we have forgotten.

Heaven consists of restored health. No one can appreciate health until it has been restored. A person who has health, who has a good digestion, who always sleeps well, who enjoys athletic sports, does not know what the enjoyment of health is. But the one who has gone down to the very gates of death and been restored knows.

Not long ago a man came to visit me. He had been South, having had consumption. When he went South, he was coughing hard, his voice was weak, his step tottering, his face thin, his eyes lustreless. But when he came to my door upon his return, he was full of life and flush and vigour and strength. As he walked up and down my room he said, "I am a boy again." He said, "I have the use of my arms. I have the use of my feet. I have the use of my lungs. I can take a long breath." Ah! No one knows the pleasure of health who has not gone down to the gates of death with disease, who has not lost and found.

Heaven is restored youth. Did you ever pray, old man, that you might be young for a day—only for one day? I have often wished I were a boy again, that I might feel as I then felt, and enjoy what I then enjoyed. Oh, to have one hour when there would be an entire absence of care! I look back and listen for the ringing of the old bell in the dear little church in the days gone by, and the absence of care. But as we go on in life and these cares multiply until their weight is heavy on the heart, and heavy on the brain, and heavy on the physique, then there come hours when we say, "Oh, let me be a boy again for a single

day! Let me feel that absence of care which once I felt and let me roam and play in the same fields. Let me look upon the same old scenes in all the innocent and delightful carelessness of youth." Who is there that hath not the longing to be a child again? And as surely as there is any truth in the wonderful Book of God, as surely as there is a revelation of that which is to be, just so surely every old man and every old woman that liveth shall be young again. And restored youth will be more sweet than the actual experience when you had it.

There will be restored friends. Restoration of friends! Often when I study the Bible, there comes to me a longing to know Christ. I wish I could have been in Jerusalem when He lived there. I should like to have walked with Him and lived there. I should like to have walked with Him and His disciples. I should like to have heard Him speak and have felt the touch of His hand, to have listened to the sound of His sweet voice in which the teaching of His wisdom was heard. I should like to have looked upon the Sea of Galilee and associated with Andrew and Peter. I should like to have been there on the Mount of Transfiguration and have

seen Moses and Elias. I should like to travel back on the record of the centuries until I would be acquainted with Moses and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Oh, how much have we lost who live but a single generation! I sometimes wish I had known the orators of Athens and Rome, had known the scholars of Greece, the philosophers of Alexandria, the warriors of Germany, the great victors of France, and the magnificent writers of England. I can live, and you can live, only a single generation, but in heaven we shall know them all. We shall know Moses, talk with him, ask him where he was buried, and how the angels managed to bury him where no man could find his tomb. We shall ask him all those questions. We shall talk to the prophets, with Christ, with the apostles. We can associate with those of generations gone. Washington and Adams shall be our companions.

Oh, the lost friendships shall also be ours! We shall witness the restoration of our own friends. Listen! Your mother's voice has died away on earth. You shall not hear it again in this land of death. But in that Land of the living, you shall hear your mother's voice once more. It is the teaching of the

Gospel. It is what this Gospel is for. It is what the Church is established for,—that you may hear that mother's voice once more. You have seen your father's face in the coffin for the last time here, and it left a sad impression on you, and you say, "I wish I could see him again in health and strength." You *will* see him again. Heaven restores. Jesus Christ said, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come again. I will restore myself to you, and you to me, and you to the friends you have left. You will know them all in heaven, and you will meet them and renew the friendships of the days gone by."

Did you read in the newspaper of that accident upon the cars wherein a great number were killed? Of a funeral in a town of this state, so largely attended? The shock, the tears, the grave—all there! The father and mother were there. Bitter tears! They looked down upon the coffin and upon the closing of the grave. They turned away and even came back a day or two later and upon the grave planted seeds that when spring sunshine should come, the plants from these seeds might be the earliest to spring forth to testify to their love for their son. Only ten days after that, there walked in their son, well,

strong, in the highest vigour of health. The surprise was almost too great for their life. They had buried the wrong body. In the accident, the disfiguration had been so great that the body they had sincerely supposed was their son was in fact the body of a stranger. But their own son returned, walked in. And when he looked them in the face, what was their impression? Ah, never in the history of these parents did they love that child as they did then! Never in the history of their life had they joy like that. They had often taken him up restored from sickness, but never restored from death before. Then can you picture to yourself the joy in yonder heaven when, within the gates, there come to us many that we have loved and lost? We will greet them again, restored in that heaven. In that place where the lost are restored, you will see the faces of a great many friends you have altogether forgotten and will renew old acquaintances which were so sweet.

You will also find there the lost joys of earth. All the lost joys! Were you happy when you stood at the altar, and the minister blessed you in your union with your bride? You *were* happy that day. Has it faded away? Have you lost all the zest of it?

Has the sweetness of it turned to bitterness through sorrow and separation? Well, in heaven, that joy shall come back to you.

And there we shall find a lost home. A restored home! Were you ever driven out of your home and years afterward returned to it?

I knew a family who, for years, lived in luxury and plenty, but through the fault of their son lost it all and were compelled to sell their home. The sheriff came in and took possession of the furniture, the farm, the land, the trees, the orchards, the fields—everything. They were obliged to go out with nothing but their clothing—nothing else. Strangers came into the home. The pair went forth penniless. They lived for some years in that condition and really needed for many of the necessities of life. Years passed and their old home was but a dream. They thought of it but it brought more sadness than joy. Sometimes they wondered how the fireplace looked. Sometimes they queried if that carpet was still there. Sometimes they questioned if the old clock still struck the hour. Sometimes they asked if the pictures they loved were still on the walls and spoke to the people in the home as they had to them.

Sometimes they wondered if the old door still creaked and if the old gate still hung on its hinges. But they could not go back.

But that son, a restored son, restored to himself through Christianity, converted in a church in Westfield, Massachusetts, said, as doth every truly converted heart, "I will set myself to make the most of myself." When he was converted, he changed his life and set for himself, as his chief ambition, the restoration of the old home. The time came when the parents were asked to ride out. As they drove up the old road, the mother said, "I do not want to go back to the old place. I cannot bear to see it in the hands of strangers." But they drove up to the gate. They did not wish to get out of the carriage. But the son induced them to get out of the carriage. Then as he stepped into the old door with mother and father, he said, "It is all yours again. I have restored it as it used to be as nearly as I could." They went in. There were the old andirons in the fireplace the same as of old. There were the pictures on the walls, the same old chairs. Even the same old carpet had been put back and cleaned as well as it could be. From room to room they went. A restored home! Ah, they enjoyed it as

never before! They sat down and cried as only joyful hearts can cry. They sang for joy, not only that the son himself had been restored from his lost condition, but that their home was again theirs. Oh, my brother, not a joy did you have in the dear old home, not a pleasure in that room, parlour or kitchen, not a pleasure anywhere that will not be restored when heaven opens its gates to you. That is the beauty of it and the joy of it. That is the glory of it. Heaven is a restored home. There can be no holier illustration of the heaven reserved for them that love their Lord than that it is to be an ETERNAL HOME!

IV

THE GREAT UNTOLD

"If it were not so, I would have told you."
—JOHN 14:2.

I ONCE saw a painting about which were gathered some of the most distinguished artists of the world, and which received from them the highest encomiums I ever heard given to a work of that kind. Yet at first, the picture seemed nothing but crayoned blackness, darkness. There were but the slightest traces of light with a very great amount of blackness. It was a picture called "Night." But after a person had stood before it and studied it for some time, he began to comprehend the design of the artist, to grasp the outlines of different figures, and at last to detect houses, trees, lakes in the distance, and the dimly shining moon through reluctantly parting clouds. Thus it grew in his estimation until he felt like falling down in reverence for the hand that could reproduce such inspiring beauty.

This picture which the Bible presents of Jesus and His disciples on the night of the Last Supper is almost to me like that painting of "Night." That was the saddest parting about which we have ever read. It had in connection with it the most sorrowful and excruciating experiences. It was so sad, it was so dark, because Jesus loved His own and loved them unto the end, and He had given them His parting message as He was about to leave them and go to the horrible cross. It was sad and dark because His own nation refused to receive Him, though all His intentions were pure and good. It was peculiarly sad and dark, for Peter, who had sworn that he would give his life for his Master, was about to deny Him. What more of sadness, what more of grief, what more of spiritual pain could you collect around an experience than was gathered in that single hour when Jesus uttered the words of this text. He had said in effect, "I am about to leave you. I must return to the Father who sent me, and I leave you as sheep among wolves. They will reduce you to poverty. They will scorn you. They will afflict you. They will cast you out of their synagogues. They will cast you into the dens of lions. They will expose you in

the amphitheatre. They will send you adrift upon the stormy sea. They will drive you into the desert, hungry and thirsty. Betrayal and sorrow shall come to you, my loved ones, because I go to my Father." There scarcely seems to be a difficult experience imaginable, hardly a dangerous place in their history, which He does not foresee and of which He does not tell His disciples. Nothing that could be discouraging, nothing that could create fear, nothing that could lead men to forsake Him, seems to have been omitted. He said everything that man could say, and more than a human being could say, to show them the dangers, trials, difficulties, sorrows and pains of the life they were to lead.

And when He had shown them this black picture, He then uttered the words I have read concerning the many mansions.

It was a picture of night, black, dark, inscrutable. They could not understand it. All were surprised. Peter said, "Oh, I will never leave thee." John said, "Is it I that will betray thee?" All felt the dreadful depression of the hour and seemed to find in it no light. Yet at that very time, after all His foreboding utterances, He sent these

words out like a prolonged flash of dazzling lightning.

There are places on the earth where the air is so devoid of moisture that the sun rises without refraction, as though it shot up from the horizon. There is no warning of its coming, no gray dawn, no beautiful premonitory glow as in our zone. Its first rays shoot straight to the eye of the observer,—no dawn, but an instant morning. And such was the case here. In the darkest midnight of those disciples' experiences, the Sun of Righteousness suddenly dawned, bursting upon them in effulgent glory in this verse, "If it were not so, I would have told you. In my Father's house are many resting places. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

I do not suppose that any of us can fully appreciate the divine sentiment which underlies these wonderful words. But we can approach an understanding of it by thinking of the extra joy of securing succor in time of danger, of receiving gifts when we are very poor, of being helped when we are in great pain. What a strength and joy it is to the timid, or to the weak to have a strong arm to lean upon!

In the gloom of that hour there was indeed danger, there was sorrow; but there was also a strong arm there. He said, "All these things shall come to you, but if the greater good were not also coming, I would tell you so." What a comfort it is to be in the darkness of night with a loved person who is strong and brave and who knows the way! Darkness adds joy to it. It is better than the morning. It is better than the light of the sun in its coming. Even darkness is joy if we are with one whom we love and fully trust who knows the way and who is strong and true. Darkness is better than light under some circumstances. When the storm beats, when the rain rattles on the roof and the hailstones scatter around the yard, what a pleasant thing it is, in the country, to go into the house fully sheltered and with the fire blazing up fresh in the old fireplace. Let it rain. The more it rains, the better. The more the hail descends, the more pleasure. The more fiercely the winds howl through the trees and roar down the chimney, the better, because we are under shelter. It is a small roof. It is a humble shelter. But we are protected, and let the storm howl. We are the happier for its howling. A short while ago an old sea

captain asked me if I remembered the storm at sea when we feared we were going to the bottom. "I saw you were greatly disturbed," he said, "but it did not disturb me. I knew there was a water-tight compartment in the vessel that the sea could not break."

I have since thought over what the old seaman said and have concluded that I would not have cared how the storm raged, and it would have been a continuous joy, had I known that we were safe. I would not have cared how the waves howled and the winds shrieked, if I had known positively that it was impossible to go to the bottom of the sea, that old Neptune possessed not the power to break the timbers or disturb the balance of the ballast. I could have enjoyed it. Let the winds blow, let the sea rise, if only we can outride the storm!

That seems to be the position in which Jesus placed His disciples. He told them all about the dangers that should come, and then suddenly said, "Let not your heart be troubled." How could they help being troubled, how could they avoid it? But He turned and said, "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many resting places, and

if it had not been so, I would have told you." Oh, those words, "*If it were not so, I would have told you!*" Wherever He foretold affliction, He prepared His disciples for it. He tells you and me that affliction will come, but He foretells us in every case so that we may be prepared for it.

In Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War, a woman rushed out in her anxiety for her country's good and warned General Washington of approaching danger. She told him a battle would come and told him in time that he might prepare for it. The battle which did come was a crown for him and a boon to the country because he was prepared for it, and freedom today breathes the air of healthful liberty because that battle was fought. So Jesus tells us of pain, of sorrow and afflictions, because if we are prepared for them they will do us good, and they will make us better and we will be permanently happier, and the world will be better, and heaven itself will sing for joy. No Christian ever enters into sorrow without a warning from God that it is to come, but God does not always tell him of the joys He has prepared for him. He says, "If it were not so that all these good things shall be yours,

I would have told you. But I do tell you of all the sorrows and difficulties and of all the dangers that are before you." The Bible appears to teach us that no sorrow comes to any Christian without God's foretelling that it is to come.

But you say, "I have often met with danger, I have tried to serve God, and yet I have met with loss and had no premonition of it." My friend, do not assert that until you think of this:—how many times has God spoken to you when you did not listen?

My father once told my sister and myself to go through the forest to a distant farm. He told us when we approached the brook to turn down to the right until we saw several stones in the stream and that there would be a safe ford. But when we found the stream, I started to wade directly across. My little sister said, "That is not the way. Father told us to go down the stream and cross where the stones were laid." I contended that he did not say anything of the kind. Said she, "You were very heedless and you did not hear." I insisted and pushed on, but when I swam back to the shore, I knew she was right. And many a Christian has been told beforehand to go down the stream and cross in such a place.

But he has not heard. He has not listened. He has not received the instruction from God because he has been heedless. He goes on his way and thinks he is going just as God directed him to go, and when he gets into the mire and swims out covered with mud, he often says, "God never told me any other way."

Oh, He did! God speaks to you and to me again and again in the most distinct terms, but we do not hear, we do not listen. It is our fault. It is our wilfully deaf ears. If we train ourselves to listen, I believe that because He saith, "Behold I am with you even unto the end," no sorrow will come to a Christian without a premonition of it, or a clear teaching that it is to be. If at the Christmas season, you should tell your children of the things you have in the closet, of the bundles under the bed, and of the packages in the pantry, and let them handle them and play with them three or four months beforehand, they would not enjoy them so much Christmas morning. If you are going to receive a Christmas present, you do not wish to know what it is until Christmas time. But if you are going to meet with a sorrow or a disappointment or loss, the sooner you know it the

better. You are anxious to know at once that you may be better prepared for it.

Now, my friend, when God is silent, when He does not speak, it is because He has a precious joy in store for you. God's silence is like the old proverb, "No news is good news." "If it were not so, I would have told you."

I remember going on an island in a lake in New Hampshire to which father had taken us for fishing. My brother and myself went into the woodlands to pick blackberries. I feared there were rattlesnakes there. I would not go into the bushes, but I kept on the shore. My older brother said, "Do you suppose father would have sent us here if there had been any snakes here? He would have warned us." He filled his basket full of berries. I did not pick any. I went back crying, and he went back with joy. Indeed, father would not have trusted us there if there had been any danger.

When crossing the Mediterranean from Palestine to Greece, a storm arose and we questioned whether we would not drift on the rocks. So we found the mate and said, "Do you think there is any danger of our going on the rocks?"

"Oh, no."

"Why not? Does the Captain say it is all safe?"

"Oh, no. He does not say it is all safe, and that is a sure reason that it is safe. If it were not safe, he would say so. He has been over here again and again. He knows every shoal and reef. He would not take us where there was any danger without telling his officers. Do not be afraid, gentlemen, do not be afraid. So long as the Captain does not say there is danger, it is all safe."

Jesus that day told them of the danger there was to be, and then turned and said, "But there are a great many joys of which I do not tell you. If there were not to be joys, I certainly would tell you."

From these precious words of Jesus, we learn that where God is silent He means joy. When He does not speak to you, it is because of lovely presents soon to be given to you. Do you pray to God? Is your prayer unanswered? You hear no voice, you see no results. Is God silent? It is because He is working. "God works in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." God builds up the mighty mountains through silent forces, and cuts them down until the valleys are filled

with fertility, in complete silence. In the night when no sound touches the most acute ear of man, God is working out His mightiest plans. The world wheels on its axis. Other worlds wheel around more distant worlds, and the mighty universe itself goes flashing on with us, and yet not a sound to indicate the mighty workings of the universe. God's mightiest plans are accomplished in silence. "If it were not so, I would have told you. If I am not answering your prayer, I will speak, I will tell you so." Hold on while God is silent, for He is working out your desires.

The great untold is the thought this text brings to me, the things God has not told. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love him." "For our light affliction which is but for the moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." We today are working out our salvation in accordance with God's teachings, and we are praying; yet all is as silent as the forest at night. But mighty, far-reaching divine forces are fashioning an answer to our prayer. "If it were not so, I would have told you." In the Garden of Eden, there was only one tree

that was forbidden. Adam and Eve could have eaten of all the thousands of varieties and could have enjoyed the fragrance of flowers which adorned the extensive mountains, plains and valleys in the Garden. To them, only one tree was prohibited. All the others were good for food, inspiring for beauty. But one tree was prohibited and distinctly prohibited.

God left no poisonous tree in Eden without putting up a sign, "This is unfit for food." God's great silence in any direction means God's great goodness. God cares more for you than your father ever cared for you. He loves you with a greater tenderness than your wife ever displayed. He is nearer to you today than any earthly friend could be. He foresees your way, and if you love Him and serve Him and study His word, no sorrow shall come to you without your being prepared for it. No temptation shall come beyond your ability to bear. Yet if you love Him, if you serve Him, the nearer you get to Him, the more silent He may seem to be, as love in silence is the sweetest love. It is not the person who is all the time professing his love and affection who loves most. It is the person who talks but little who is really the

staunch, firm friend of the years. It is he who in silence works for you steadily upon whom you can safely depend. Love is not excitable. True love is not brilliant, flashing or astounding. It is silent, peaceable, sweet, working out its noble plans in silence, and often most diligent when the loved one is absent. It is ever doing for the absent one. Such is God's love for us. When we think He has forgotten us, when we think He does not care for us, when we think He does not answer our prayers, it is the time, perhaps, of all others when He is doing the most, loving us the most dearly, and helping us the most efficiently.

But these words also apply to a subject sublimer than human mind can yet comprehend. "In my Father's home" (I give the literal translation) "there are many resting places. If it were not so, I would have told you." You shall have sorrows and tribulations in this life, and as they come to you, you shall be prepared for them from time to time, and they will do you good and do the world good. But when you have passed through these tribulations, then there are mansions prepared for you from the foundation of the world which you will enjoy. But I cannot

describe to you all their beauty. I cannot tell you of all their pleasures. I cannot explain it to you so that you can comprehend eternity. Joy! Joy! Through the rolling, rolling years! If you begin now and were to go on from imagined eternity to eternity as conceived in the human mind, you would still have myriads of years beyond.

"When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.

"Go wing thy flight from star to star,
From world to luminous world as far
As the universe spreads its flaming wall;
Take all the pleasures of all the spheres
And multiply each through endless years,
One moment of heaven exceeds them all."

Even Jesus Himself could not describe heaven so that man could understand it. He says there is a rest, an indescribable rest for the people of God. "If it were not so, I would have told you."

There are a great many things about death, the death of the body, the resurrection of the body, which we cannot understand. There are a great many things about the connection

of this life with the other life, about our spiritual existence here and there which we cannot explain. But it is enough for us to know that when God is silent He is providing for us well. Let us trust Him, and if there are dangers ahead for us, He will tell us. If there are sorrows ahead, He will prepare us for them. And inasmuch as He is silent on any side, insomuch He is surpassingly loving, and with divine tenderness is providing for our wants. Friends, let us never forget when we borrow trouble and fear sorrows of tomorrow, and question doubtfully about eternity, that Christ hath said that our joys shall be greater than we expect. "If it were not so, I would have told you."

V

DIVERGING PATHS

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."—Acts 13: 1, 2.

I CALL your special attention to the words, "and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch." Here were two boys brought up together, Manaen being welcomed into the home of the king for the purpose of furnishing to Herod Antipas a companion through his early years. Two playmates, two playmates together, the poor boy and the rich boy, the plebeian and the patrician! But through their early years, I do not believe there was any known difference. Manaen felt he had as many rights as did Antipas, and Antipas assumed no superiority in their early boyish days, in those lovely

days, beautiful days of childhood, when the two boys played together by the same stream, wandered through the same fields, plucked the same flowers, chased the same butterflies, wandered on the same hills, occupied the same bed at night and were awakened by the same birds in the morning. Oh, it was delightful! These two boys dwelling together, intimate friends, studying the same books, under the same teachers, under the same roof, breathing the same air, and having many of the same ambitions!

But we find that at a time a little later, these two boys separated. They turned in directions entirely opposite, both in their official relations to the world, and in their moral and religious characters. It is an interesting study to compare the lives of Manaen and Antipas and see what influences were brought to bear to send Antipas into exile and distress, to suicide in France, and send Manaen into the first great Christian church at Antioch, as a teacher of its living principles. Could we trace their history well, I suppose we would need only to consider the beginning and the end.

I was once taken into a shop where steam engines were made and I was shown the crude

iron. I was then taken into another shop where a locomotive was completed, polished and ready for the coal and steam. Then, standing by the finished locomotive, an expert explained the processes through which the iron must go from the crude form to the magnificent, powerful engine shown in the locomotive. He could take the locomotive and show all the intervening history of the iron, just as the scientific mathematician, when you show him a point from which an arrow started and then show it to him as it fell, can tell you the complete arc which that arrow made from the bow to its destination. So if we have the beginning and end of two boys' lives like these, we can easily read the intervening story. The Scriptures do not need to give the details of their history. These two boys were as brothers together, like Jonathan and David, like Damon and Pythias. They loved each other. Antipas was not a bad boy, not a bad young man. We find them together. They must have had the sweetest converse, these two boys, and yet there came a time in their history when these two boys with all their friendship, with all their affection, with their years of life together, divided. Their paths diverged to opposite extremes.

I suppose that if we could read their history, we would find that Herod Antipas was continually flattered. He was placed under the influence of undeserved praise. These flatterers hoped that when he became king, he would confer upon them some favours, and so for selfish ends, they represented the boy to be brighter than he was, wiser than he was, and better than he was. As soon as a young man or a boy gets that notion into his mind that he is greater than he is, that he is brighter than he is, that he is better than he is, he has taken the road which leads to destruction. And he must turn away from it. As soon as a young man feels that he is so much better than he actually is, when his own estimate is so much higher than the estimates good judges would give of him. when he spends money to dress himself, and runs into debt for gaudy clothes, then he is pursuing a most foolish as well as sinful course. The young man who thinks he is so much better than other young men, so much wiser than his father, is on the way to miserable failure.

Then, Antipas had money, plenty of money, more money than he had grown to by experience. His father had plenty, his mother had plenty, his friends had plenty.

He never knew the value of it. He was never obliged to earn any. He did not understand how much good he might do with it or get from it. And the moment a young man gets one dollar more capital than his experience confirms or enables him to manage, he has got something to curse him.

Then, Antipas had before him the hope of office. When a young man falls into the greedy spirit of the politician and desires very much to be elected to some political office, and desires it sufficiently to make dishonest bargains with his friends, the voters, he has taken that road which Antipas pursued.

Manaen was a poor boy. Consequently he had no flatterers. I have no question but that some people represented him as less than he was, and that is a great deal better for a boy than to be represented as more than he is. He had no money of his own. He was hired to remain with Antipas, and consequently having no money, he was obliged to work and earn his own way. He had no hope of office, no ambition for political promotion. Consequently the ambitions of these two, and the conditions of them both in youth, were very different. But there came a time in the life of both when they must choose. Manaen

must choose whether he will be a mere flatterer to Antipas, or whether he will be a man in himself, whether he will be kingly in spirit, or whether he will be a mere sycophant to fawn upon a king. The time came when Manaen must choose. It is as distinct in history as if it had been all written down with the closest accuracy that Manaen came to the point in life when he must choose, "Shall I go with Antipas and endeavour to keep up with his position? Shall I borrow money, or steal money, or get it by robbery, for the purpose of maintaining the position?" Manaen was brought to face that very question, "Shall I get money dishonestly with which to maintain my position with those who are richer than I?" There are some of you to whom this question comes home. You are trying by some means to get hold of money, honestly or dishonestly, to pay for balls or displays, that you may associate with those richer than yourself. Manaen chose rather to be poor than to resort to any dishonest methods with which to get money. That much is clear from his subsequent history. We can judge from the end.

He was willing to acknowledge that he was poor. Ah, that is a magnificent, that is a

sublime position! When you find a young man who is willing to confess, "I am poor," you have a man you can trust. You have one whom you can lean upon. You have one who will close his life with the love of thousands around him. "I am not ashamed to be poor, but I am ashamed to go into debt for false representations,"—that was the position of Manaen. He would not pilfer, he would not steal, he would not be dishonest in order that he might associate longer with Herod Antipas, his young companion. There came a time when he chose to be noble. He said, "I will be a man. He may have the throne, the purple and the gold, and flatterers. But I will be a true man." That choice came. It also came to Antipas, but he chose the baser course. Manaen chose to be a man. Herod Antipas might go to the amusements in the amphitheatre, and make great parades, but Manaen could not honestly do it.

Manaen chose to reverence womanhood, but Antipas chose to place himself in the position of a sport in society and ridicule the name and fame of woman. When a young man makes sport of a woman's character or fair fame, he has a heart as black as the very fumes of hell. No man can trust him. No

woman can trust him. God cannot trust him. The curses of the Everlasting usually descend upon him, as they did on Herod Antipas. He that reverences not womanhood, reverences not God. He that reverences not womanhood is positively dishonest. He that will make sport, or resort to schemes in order to advance upon woman with temptation, is far beneath this beautiful character of Manaen, and has gone down to the absurd and devilish level of Antipas, who married his brother's wife, and who, for her daughter, murdered John the Baptist, and in consequence reaped the reward of his labours in years of suffering, and death in obscurity.

Then there came a time when Manaen was called upon to choose in religion. "Shall I be a Christian or shall I not?" Antipas said, "I will not. Give me the world, its shows, its displays, all these things. I will not be a Christian." Manaen said, "I will." This holy Scripture states that Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod, the tetrarch, was one of the teachers in the first church at Antioch, and honoured by good men, loved by good women, admired by all who had their tastes high and noble and true. We look at the end of their lives. You can see the

end from the beginning. Young men like Manaen, or young men like Antipas, you can see your fate from your own beginning.

Which was the happier here, Manaen or Antipas? "Antipas, are you happy? After all your disgraceful escapades, are you happy? With all your wasted money for dress, are you happy? After all the money you have paid for drink for friends, after all your parade in amphitheatres and balls, with all your political offices, are you happy?" "No. I have not had a happy hour on earth, and will not have a happy hour through all the rolling ages."

"Manaen, are you happy?" "I am happy." "Were you happy here?" "Yes. I was happy day by day, enjoyed every sunset and was happy in every sunrise. I loved the day. I loved the night. The stars in their beauty gleamed joy for me because I had chosen to do that which God has commanded every man to choose to do, to serve the right, the true, to believe in God, to follow simply Jesus, the Christ." "Are you happy now, Manaen?" "Yes. In the fields of God I live where there is no more suffering, where there is no more crying, in this eternal land of beauty, to dwell forever with God, never to see again any sor-

row. I chose to be humble and to be honest. I chose to be simple and to be plain. I chose to be earnest. I chose to be true. I chose to love God and to believe in Christ."

Compare Manaen with Antipas. Manaen was happiest, noblest, best, as a working member of the church at Antioch, and gained greater pleasure, honour and true success than did his playmate in all his sports, offices and treasures.

VI

THE WORST AND THE BEST

"Little foxes that spoil the vines."
—Song of Solomon 2: 15.

I HAVE often heard this text used, but I never heard it when it suggested to the one preaching from it just what it seems to suggest to me. When we first opened this Temple and held herein the great bazaar, an officer of the law brought to me three boys who were arrested for malicious mischief in the building. I talked with all three. I said to them, "If I allow you to go without prosecution, and the officer says he will release you if I say so, and you go altogether to evil, I shall always regret that I permitted you to go free." They all with one accord begged for their liberty and promised to reform and never to wantonly injure the property of another. Of one of these, I have never heard a word. Of one I have heard that he did keep his word and has held on in a way that doth lead to honour and success. Of the other I heard through a very sad appeal, asking me

to visit his family and break to them the news that he has been sent to the penitentiary in California for eleven years.

Coming to me as this request did, it seems to put upon me the necessity to bring forth the sense of this verse as it has always suggested itself to me. It may be that we interpret the Scriptures through the colour of our own minds and largely regulate our understanding of them by our own experience. When a boy, I set out, at some distance from the house, a grapevine and a trellis. The grapevine prospered. One season when the grapes promised well and I anticipated a treasure of income from the fruit thereof, a fox dug his hole close to that trellis, and when the little foxes came forth to play, they destroyed that vine by eating away the bark. They did not wish the bark for food. They had no desire to get at the fruit. They seemed determined only to destroy the vine, and I have thought that Solomon or whoever wrote this *Song* may have had in mind this very thought. These are the little foxes that destroy the vine, not for the purpose of getting at the fruit, not because they need to eat of the bark, but for mere wanton, malicious mischief.

It seems to me that if there is any evil against which the voice of Christianity should now be raised above all others, it is this tendency in many forms toward malicious mischief. It furnishes also, for teaching by contrast, the darkest background to something altogether lovely in the character of a Christian. He who steals when he has no desire for personal gain is a contemptible character. But he who gives with no desire for personal gain is a noble, heroic person. And let me set in contrast the little foxes who spoil the vines with the little foxes who would take good care of the vines, though neither has any of the fruit.

I look back upon my experience as a criminal lawyer, and especially to a time when I was intending to write a book upon certain classes of legal evidence. I spent many weeks in visiting prisons and jails of the several New England states, and it was a curious thing to notice the two distinct classes of people who occupy those jails and prisons. There is one class for whom I feel the greatest sympathy. They belong to the class of the extremely poor, those who have been brought up in the slums, in the cellars, in attics, who have grown up without education, either

mental, physical or spiritual, who have come up with no mother's kind attention, who have grown up through the years with a father's cruel oppression, who have only been despised by the public, abused by the public officers, been beaten about until they think this world is only a place of cruelty, sorrow and crime, and that the more crime they can commit without discovery, the greater their heroism. I have great sympathy for that class of people. There are a great many people in our prisons like that, but there are also a great many people outside of our prisons and jails who are far more deserving of the prison than are many of the class who are there.

I have seen, in those prisons, boys who have never heard a sincerely kind word addressed to them. If you speak to them kindly, they look at you in surprise and cannot believe that you intend kindness. I have seen there men who think it is impossible for any man to be righteous and honest. I have seen there young men and women who have been taught by their parents, from the time they could walk, to pick pockets and to steal from the public marts. They had been taught that it was the only hope they had of getting anything to eat, or wear, and in the presence of

man's law, they must be judged all alike by their outward acts. But God's law judges not in that way. My heart has been filled with sympathy; yea, tears have come to my eyes, as I have talked with many prisoners belonging to that unfortunate class of those who, being born into poverty and into the slums and haunts of vice and wickedness, never know the purity of a Christian home or a Christian church. They are to receive our sympathy. But in these prisons and jails are a large class who are altogether without excuse. They have no excuse.

My attention was once called to a family of children in New Hampshire. All the children, save one who was a cripple, were in some of the different prisons. In trying to trace their history, for the purpose of establishing certain theories of evidence, I discovered this very singular fact—that they all lived in a home where the parents attended church. But the mother was a notorious gossip, and at her table when she returned from church, she repeated evil things that she had heard, or surmised, concerning the church members. She had talked against the membership of the church until she turned the hearts of her children entirely against Chris-

tianity, until they despised the church, despised Christians, and scoffed and ridiculed everything connected with the Bible. She had no intention of thus turning her children; but she had that very sad habit of destroying the reputation of others without hope of gain to herself. Hers was the spirit of malicious mischief. She would tear down the good name of other women when it would in no wise assist her. She would destroy the vines with no hope of personal gain. Such a person as that is inexcusable.

In one prison, I found a young man of about twenty-five years of age who was there for wrongfully taking property. He was pointed out to me as a kleptomaniac, a person who could not resist the temptation to steal, though he did not want the things he stole. When his story was related to me, I found that his father had kept a store, and this boy, although he had everything he could reasonably wish, his father furnishing him with clothing, books, horses to ride, and every luxury, began by stealing pennies that he did not need. He did not wish to buy anything. His family condoned the crime again and again. They did not punish it with that severity which would fasten on the boy's mind the

wrong of stealing. He told the warden of a place where he had buried a little tin can filled with pennies, which he had stolen from his father's store and buried there in his boyhood. He had been stealing when he did not want the pennies. He had been taking what he did not need. He was entirely without excuse. It is no surprise that such a person should be led on to the extremes of sin.

The newspapers told us recently of a very strange suicide of a man at Monte Carlo. He went out and tragically shot himself upon the cliffs where his body fell and was crushed to pieces on the ragged rocks. It was a terrible suicide, it was said. He had been led to it by gambling, by betting heavily and losing, so that he was reduced to disgrace. But the history of that man's life, as given by the newspapers, showed this same spirit of malicious mischief, that of trying to get from others what one does not need one's self. He began his wild life by cheating at marbles. When a boy cheats at marbles on the street or in your yard, and you know it, if you do not rebuke with the greatest severity the beginning of that spirit, you are condoning an awful crime. For as soon as any young man or woman reaches that extreme position where he will

take from another that for which he will give no honest equivalent, he is in a dangerous path that leads to certain destruction.

The same spirit is shown in the way many people treat sacred things. There was, in college with me, a young man who came from a Christian home, but having read some infidel books he prided himself, as many a college student does, that he knew a great deal more than his father. He began to scoff at sacred things. He began to ridicule them, and attended religious meetings for the purpose of ridiculing. Well do I remember him, because I was not altogether guiltless myself, and he went into these meetings and ridiculed. He disturbed the meetings by making absurd remarks in loud whispers. He would sometimes go to church and write criticisms of what the minister was saying upon pieces of paper and pass them around among the students. He thought it was great sport thus to make fun of sacred things. He did not know how that wounded the hearts of true Christians. He did not know how dear is the reverence of Christians for sacred things. If he did know, he lacked the heart, that heart of kindness which would pay reverence even to the worship of an idolator. If a Chinaman

bows down to a fetish and is engaged in prayer, I would respect his prayer until it is done. Yet the heart that is hard enough to maliciously break in upon the reverence of others for sacred things is leading the path that young man took. For he has been since then seven years in prison, and is today in a poverty-stricken quarter of New York living on the merest pittance, and yet a college graduate. What is education for a man with a spirit like that, a man with the vile spirit that robs another for wanton destruction?

I was greatly interested in an essay I once read on Benedict Arnold that gave a sketch of his early life. The writer mentioned how Arnold ridiculed the idea of sentimental patriotism. He considered it a kind of effeminacy. Patriotism might do for women and children, but men wish to see the pay. Men work for pay. This essay brought out Benedict Arnold's early life in such a way that I could understand why he sold his country. It all followed because he had trained himself to pull down and destroy, even when there was no hope of personal gain to himself.

In one of these prisons I visited of which I have spoken, I saw a young man who years before went to his mother and requested per-

mission to unite with the Church. But his mother said to him, "No, I am not myself a member of the Church. I live good enough." She injured her child with no expectation of gain for herself. And yet that same mother when I was in that prison was waiting in sadness in the ante-room for me to finish my interview in order that she might go in and visit her son. He would have been saved to righteousness and truth and goodness had that mother respected that child's desire for an open religious experience. It was no gain to her to keep him out of church, yet she destroyed him, with no hope of personal advancement. How many a young man and woman has been kept from the Church by a father's ridicule of Christians! I know myself of a young man who has gone into the ways of evil but who came before the deacons of this church, and this young man's father objected to his joining the church, or entertaining the thought of being a Christian. The father said he had seen so many dishonest, disreputable, bad Christians that he did not want any of his family to have anything to do with Christians. Thus he talked about Christians to that young man, and the father now in his broken-hearted sorrow may well

look back upon the time when he assailed without benefit to himself that which was good.

A murderer was brought up to trial. I went to gather some of the evidence and found that when he was but a little boy, his parents permitted him to be cruel to a harmless little dog. Oh, then was the time to save him from murder! Then was the time to turn him to the path of righteousness, when he was cruel to that little dog.

Others in that prison were brought up to be lazy. They were not made to work. Brought up without having to work! What a misfortune for a boy to be brought up without knowing the value of money, to be given money and never to know that men have to work for it, to be reared in such a way as to get all the time and give nothing! The time will come when such a boy will have to work, when he will steal, or borrow, or rob, to get money. Ah, sad, sad, is the history of boys brought up without working! They take from others without gain to themselves.

There was in the criminal court in Boston, when I was practising there, a man who, always came in to make fun of the "drunks" as he called them. Sometimes he came within

the bar with the attorneys and made fun of the men and women who were brought up for drunkenness and smaller crimes. Great sport for him! He who made sad lives sadder with no good to himself was soon himself brought before the same court, and again before the higher court, and is now paying the penalty for the natural results in crime of that very sport.

The man who destroys another without hope of bringing himself any return is the nearest to the wholly lost condition of any soul of which I can now dream.

A man burned his father and mother in their own house in Connecticut. He set the barn on fire to see it burn, never expecting that the house itself would be burned and that his father's and mother's ashes would be shovelled up with the dark débris. He had nothing to gain from the burning but he had given way to that spirit of malicious mischief, advancing from smaller to larger things until he had destroyed his parents' property and themselves, all from a mere spirit of malicious mischief.

Oh, what moral suicide it is for a man to overthrow his hope of salvation by giving way to such a spirit as this! And yet, friends,

you and I, all of us in a measure, have given way to this same spirit. If a man strikes a knife to his heart, or sends a bullet to his brain, we look on him as very foolish and wicked. But more foolish and wicked is the man who stabs his soul by ever indulging, by inference or directly, the desire to take from another or injure another with no hope of gain for himself. It is wicked enough to steal for personal gain. It is wicked enough to rob for one's own personal advancement. But when by word, by look, by act or deed, we take from another that which does not enrich us, it makes him poor and makes us doubly poor. It is suicide.

I have said that I want to set up in direct personal contrast with this thought, the character that is lovely. I want to set it against this dark background. Just as he who, taking that which does not enrich him but makes another poor, represents the worst character on earth, so on the other hand, he who gives with no hope of personal gain, represents the loveliest character on earth.

As Christ gave Himself with no hope of gain to Himself that we might be benefited by His sacrifice, so they who are ever saying words of helpfulness, ever doing deeds of

kindness, ever sacrificing of that which they possess without hope of return, are presenting a character most like Him. They who give for others' good without expectation of personal advancement represent the noblest, loveliest character conceivable to the human mind.

To do good and ask for no return is Christlike. To do evil without hope of gain is Satanic. To which of these classes do we, or will we, belong? Choose good that thou and thy seed may live!

VII

A SURE PROMISE

"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."
—II Corinthians 1:20.

I WOULD select as an illustration of the dark side of this picture, before presenting that which is brighter, one of the meanest characters in the records of the Old Testament, which has always to deal with a dark age and frequently with bad men. I think that prosperous farmer, Nabal, was the most contemptible character presented in the records of the Bible, yet he illustrates, by contrast, the thought of my text. (You may read his story in the twenty-fifth chapter of the first Book of Samuel.)

Nabal was rich, owned a great farm, two thousand sheep, a thousand goats, a great many servants, and a lovely home in a beautiful locality amid majestic mountains. From it he could look away upon the blue of the magnificent Mediterranean. He was rich and he ought to have been happy. But one

of the sad things about his life was that he was rich and yet was not happy. I think that is one of the most deplorable conditions that can be found in the lives of men, that a man can be rich and not happy. Think for a moment what the character of such a man must be. He has everything around him to make him happy. He has a lovely home. It is paid for. He has sufficient money at interest to meet all his expenses without any worry. He has the social position which wealth brings to a man. He has all the honours that come to him who has been successful. His family live in luxury. Yet he is not happy. Those of us who are very poor and who look at rich men say, "If we owned a home, we would be very happy." Or, "If we had money enough to pay all our expenses, we would be very happy." So when we look at such a character and find him unhappy, we see that it is entirely his own fault. It was not the fault of circumstances. It was not the fault of disease. It was not the fault of anything but himself. And if when a man has everything to do with, he is not happy, he must have a contemptible spirit, and must have obtained his money dishonestly. Hence the first lesson I draw in contrast with the line of my text is

that Nabal, the Carmelite, was rich and not happy.

In the next place, as you study a little into the dark picture, almost too dark to study, we find that he had quite a number of employees. But his employees bore deliberate testimony against him. His employees described the meanness of his character, the contemptible nature of his deeds. They told how stingy he was. They told how little he cared for other people, provided he could make a dollar for himself. His employees did not respect him, and it is a very mean man who lives with employees for many years and they do not respect him. They have an opportunity to see him as other people do not, and he has many opportunities of doing them kindnesses, even though these might be for his selfish interest. If a man does not win the favour, the praise, and the open applause of his employees, it is because he does not use the opportunities God gives him to win for himself an excellent name. Just think of it! He has the opportunity to furnish them with the means of keeping their homes, with the means of being happy, with the means of doing good. Not only that, he has many an opportunity of doing them a kindly favour which does not in

any sense impoverish himself. So if a man employ others, and they reasonably speak against him, it is because he has, as a rule, a very bad, selfish character.

Then in the next place, though Nabal was a rich man, he did not pay his honest debts. He was one of the kind of men who keep a lawyer all their life just to swindle people out of what they ought to pay. He was one of that sort of men who let every bill that they owe go just as long as they can and then scold and fret, and perhaps swear, when it is presented to be paid. He was one of those men who if he could beat down a grocery dealer five cents on a bill of a hundred dollars, would talk an hour to do it. We think such characters now are contemptible people, and we find Nabal seizing any opportunity to get out of paying his debts and most diligently escaping them.

David had worked with a good conscience to protect Nabal's crops and flocks. David's men had come themselves willingly to his service, day after day, month after month; and then when David asked of him just the merest pittance compared with what he owed, he in effect said, "You cannot collect it by law and I won't pay it." Is there in the

history of the business world, a man whose character is more contemptible than he who simply because a debt cannot be collected by law refuses to pay it? No wonder he was unhappy.

Then he had no sympathy. Here were people hungry, and people without sufficient clothing. Here was the opportunity to do good. But he had no sympathy. His own employees needed food and clothing. He saw it and knew it but he had no sympathy, so hard was his heart. The end of the story is that his heart was "like a stone." His wife knew this all the way along. His neighbours knew all his life that his heart was like a stone. But he did not find it out until the end of his life. He did not find out what a heart he had until it was too late to soften it.

Then we notice again in the record of Nabal that he never made any gifts. He never gave away anything. He said, "Who are these people who come around here at this season of the year and ask that I shall give them something? I earned all these flocks, and to get them have used my brain, and have economised and screwed down my employees, and made sharp bargains, and must I now go and give them away to some servant who may

have strayed away from his master?" No presents! Christmas came, but no presents! The season came for him to remember those who had been kind to him, who had sacrificed for him voluntarily, and yet not a present. No present for his wife who loved him, no present for his employees who served him, no present for the friends who had deliberately surrendered themselves to his service, none at all. Christmas came and went, or that season which answers to our modern Christmas, and he made no one a present. How could such a man, living under such circumstances, when such thoughts are continually suggested, have lived through the season and not felt such a contempt for himself as to go and drown himself? What use is such a man to the world? What use is he to himself? What respect can he have for his own character,—a man who has been served and loved and helped for the whole year and who, having plenty of wealth, refuses at that season to make a present! I will not follow that thought further because it awakens in my heart indignation, and I might say what would defeat my purpose.

In the next place, he sold himself to Satan, and every man who has sold himself to Satan,

from the time of Faust to the present day, has always made a very bad bargain. Nabal's name means "folly." Folly was a foolish man and with all his boasted sharpness made a miserable bargain with Satan. He said unto him, "If you will let me prosper and help me make sharp bargains, assist me in being dishonest, assist me in getting around the law, assist me in my large flocks, assist me in my life, then you may have all that I am." He was like a man of whom we once heard who said, "I am going to be the owner of that railroad. Honestly or dishonestly, I will own that railroad." He secured the railroad and with it a lingering disease that carried him down to a fearful death and to a more fearful eternity. He sold his future for what he could gain of today.

This is the object of my contrast, that Nabal sold himself foolishly, as every other person does who takes the promises of Satan in the place of the promises of God. He illustrates well the promises of Satan. They always declare, "If you will give yourself today to a little pleasure, then tomorrow you shall suffer much." But God's promises are, "If you give yourself wholly to God today, tomorrow you shall be happy much." The

difference between evil and good, between right and wrong, between Christianity and worldliness, is entirely in this, that Christianity comprises those who sacrifice today for the good of tomorrow, while worldliness and evil say, "Take the good of today and then reap the sorrows of tomorrow." Nabal had prospered. He had all the good things that he might have been striving for, but he had made a very bad bargain. Satan had held out to him that if he attained those riches, they would make him happy. But they did not. Satan held out to him that if he would be narrow and stingy and contemptible until he had secured his wealth, then he could be liberal. But he was not. Satan said, "Shut your heart, have no sympathy, dishonestly retain your cents today, and you shall have and enjoy the dollars tomorrow." Satan says, "Sell these days to me and I will make you happy today." But God says, "Give these to me and I will make you happy tomorrow."

The whole illustration from this chapter appears in this—that Satan promised Nabal a great deal more than Nabal ever received, and this is the general character of Satan according to Christ's own teaching. Satan ever

promises more than he intends to give. But with God, never do His promises reach the full proportion of His giving. Satan awakens ambitions and hopes for great things, afterward to break them and to delight in their destruction. Satan says, "Take this poison and you will be happy." You taste it and it does seem to be sweet to the present taste, but ah, it is death. It is poison. Satan says to the gambling young man, "Come in, join in a game of cards, and you shall make a fortune at gaming." Satan leads him by giving him a little success. He ventures a dollar and gets five and feels, "Yes, that is my luck." But it is Satan's luck. Far better to have lost a dollar or five dollars than to have won, because he has taken Satan at his promise and declares, "I will go on and I shall be rich." He sacrifices all he has, all he can borrow, and all he can steal from his employer's till, and all he can get by forgery, and he lands in prison. Satan's promises broken. Satan's promises are ever broken.

Temptation! What is temptation but a Nabal, a foolishness, a folly? Temptation means an attempt to secure present joy at the sacrifice of the future. That is temp-

tation. Nothing else can be temptation. Temptation means a foolish bargain in which for a little present experience, we give a long series of future pain. Christ died to present that thought, that men might be wise, that they might learn and secure the greatest possible good out of this present life, and that they might gain a far more glorious existence in the world to come. We have presented again in our lives, characters like Nabal, and we always find them turning out as his life turned out, "a heart of stone," and he dieth unregretted, uncared for, with no person to offer a prayer or shed a tear, with not even his wife to mourn that he is dead. He took Satan's promises, he was tempted, he was foolish, he gave way to present sin. Satan says, "Enjoy this now, enjoy this now." God says, "Whom I love I chasten. In this present day, ye shall have tribulation. Count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, but rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, you shall rejoice with exceeding joy." And the text sayeth, "The promises of our God are yea and in him Amen."

"No word He hath spoken
Was ever yet broken."

God keeps His promises, but they differ from Satan's promises in this that God requireth of us present sacrifices. He saith to a man who would have salvation, "Repent and believe." Repentance requires an acknowledgment of sin, and it is a bitter thing to do. Repentance requires sadness over a wasted life. Repentance requires that we should go to those we have wronged and ask them for forgiveness. Repentance requires that man shall give all his present time for the sake of the future. It requires that he shall so abnegate himself before God as to pass through present bitter but just experiences, feeling the weight of his sin. Yes, God's promises are true, but they say you must pass through the valley before you shall ascend into the mountain. They are always true.

Who gets the most out of this life? The man who takes Satan's promises and tries to extract from them his present good, or the man who trusts God and takes His word and descends into the valley willingly? He who would have property for the future must save today. He who would be righteous tomorrow

must repent today. He who would inherit everlasting life must be ready to give this present time, and yet the promises of God are that we shall have even more in this present life. And they are always true.

The way of happiness is along the promises of God. A young man by serving Satan never made himself happy in this life or in that which is to come. I said that God's promises were yea and amen. Yes, and He promises less than He gives. The man who awakens hopes of great things and disappoints, we regard with contempt. Satan is ever thus. But God, though He promises great things has ever greater things in store. His word is absolutely true. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." We have wonderful descriptions of the towers of heaven, magnificent tales of its golden streets, of its river of life, of its trees of green. We have a great many glimpses of heaven which show that there is a sublimity, a grandeur there beyond what man can describe, and yet how far short does our idea of heaven come when we consider what God will do beyond that which He hath promised. No man ever

gave his heart to Christ in this present time without being happier than he thought he would be. No man ever adopted this gospel teaching without prospering more than he thought he would prosper. No man ever gave his heart to Christ out and out without receiving when he passes beyond a more glorious reward than the human imagination ever conceived. Satan's promises are always broken. God's promises are always kept.

VIII

THE CONTRARY WIND

"For the wind was contrary."—MATTHEW 14:24.

IN Sharon, Massachusetts, many years ago, men laughed because a minister preached a very carefully written sermon upon the text, "Casting all your care on him, for he careth for you," and on his way home from church fell into a well.

That beautiful sermon on God's care, preached in that church in Sharon, Massachusetts, that morning, was very carefully written. The man had taken all the week, working day and night, to bring to bear upon the hearts of his congregation the fact that God careth for all and that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without the Father's notice. He had prepared it so excellently, and had convinced himself and others so fully that no harm could come to one and no plague come nigh one's dwelling, that when he, on his way home, fell into an open well, the accident seemed conclusively to put the lie upon all he had stated.

For years afterward, it was the common stock for laughter in the community that he had preached so confidently on God's divine care and immediately thereafter had fallen into a well. But that same man became a noted writer for the religious press in the city of Boston. By the fall into the well, he was injured greatly and was a long time ill. He was sent to a hospital in the city of Boston, a city he had never visited before. As Paul went to Rome, so he went by force of providential combinations to Boston. Being a better writer than he was speaker, being an essayist rather than an orator, God told him there in the hospital to write for the magazines and the newspapers. He began to do it, and no man in this country has led its religious thought more surely than the man who fell into the well.

These disciples on that night were rowing with all their force from Tiberius toward Capernaum and in nine hours gained but three miles. It was very dark, the sea raged, all the elements of nature seemed against them. We have it especially stated that "the wind was contrary." Jesus must have known that the wind would rise. I think that He did. We all believe that Christ knew all that

a prophet would know. We of course do not believe that Christ knew everything, because that would take away from Him His humanity and destroy the humility said to lie in His sacrifice for us. Christ became flesh, came into the human body, limited Himself by human surroundings, and knew what only any prophet like Elisha would know under the circumstances. He was subject to temptation in all points like as we are. With divine knowledge of everything, He could not have been tempted at all.

So that it is unreasonable to say that Christ, the divine man, knew everything when we are told in the Scriptures that there are some things the Father has hidden with Himself, that He did not even reveal to the Son, concerning the end of the world. But that Jesus knew the storm was coming, I have no doubt. He knew where the fish were when the disciples dropped the net. He knew how to multiply the loaf into many loaves. He understood so much about it that He could do it. So I am satisfied that when Jesus constrained His disciples on the shore at the foot of that mountain where He had fed the five thousand to enter that boat and to row away across the sea of Galilee for

Capernaum, that He knew the storm would beat down through those awful funnels and that it would stir that sea into a rage. He knew it. He foresaw it.

It was part of a great acted symbol. In that Eastern land, they are full of symbols. Everything they do has some kind of symbolic meaning. The colour of the sandals, the colour of the turban, the cut of the clothing, the manner of their gestures, the point of the compass toward which people face their houses, the kind of utensils they use within, everything is connected with some mysterious, ritualistic meaning. Those Eastern people live in that way. In that land, we find explanations of the Bible in the symbolism of everything they do. We find that every event had an underlying spiritual meaning which does not appear in the mere relation of facts. But if we put the facts together as a symbol, we will find a most excellent gospel truth.

Up there on the mount where the Sermon on the Mount was delivered and where He fed the five thousand, He prepared a great lesson for His disciples. For when the disciples found that He possessed that miraculous power of multiplying a few loaves into many, and a few fish into many, their hearts

became greatly elated. When the people around Him, that great throng, began to shout as people will at a "free lunch" where they receive something for nothing, "Let us make Him king," the apostles' hearts swelled with pride. They knew that if Christ became the king of Palestine, they would hold the cabinet offices. One of them would be the High Priest, and the others would sit upon the supreme bench in the Sanhedrin.

All were looking to be first. All were looking for some high place in His coming kingdom. How their pride must have arisen when they said, "Yes, these people will proclaim Him king! He can feed them without expense. There will be no more labour, no more taxation, no more poverty, when He comes to be king. He will dispense with labour and do away with poverty with no effort whatever. He will be the king and we will be ministers of state." Then, amid the acclaim of the multitude, Jesus called them aside and said to them, "I am going up into the mountain alone to pray and I wish you to go down to the boat and row across to Capernaum. I will meet you over there."

This order had a mystery in it, too. But they were used to symbols, were well ac-

quainted with His teaching by parables, and knew that the only thing for them to do was to obey, for He had said to them, "He that doeth my will shall know my doctrine and only he that doeth it shall know it." They then descended the mountain. They reluctantly left the applauding multitude and started to row across the lake. It was not far to walk to Capernaum from the Mount of the Beatitudes, down through Arbela and around by Bethsaida. It could have been reached very easily on foot. The five thousand indeed did go that way. But Jesus said to His disciples, "Take that boat and row across to Capernaum." He must have meant something more than the mere fact that they should reach Capernaum, and probably it was in their hearts that such was the case.

When He had fed the five thousand with those loaves, I suppose there were four classes of people there. The apostles made one class, and the multitude were divided into three classes. Suppose you had asked a man who saw it, "How do you think Christ did that?" Suppose that today it were possible that Jesus should appear and should take two loaves of bread and should multiply them to feed twenty-five hundred or three thousand

people. What would you say were the means whereby He accomplished it? One division would say it was a clear fraud. One class would say He did it entirely by magic, by legerdemain, by some sleight of hand, by some trick. Another class would say He could not have done it through trickery because He was honest. Some would say, "I know Him. I have heard of Him. I have seen Him. I know He is a straightforward, honest man. He would not resort to any tricks. It is not like Him." They would have said, "He is wiser than we. He must know how to do such a thing better than we do." But His disciples would have said that it was because of the divine power He possessed. There was no fraud. There was no magic. It was because of His understanding, not only of the laws of this earth but of the laws of spirit life.

The disciples came down to their boats to row. Young ministers called to preach the gospel often see a preacher standing before an affectionate multitude of people. They see him greatly loved and honoured, and the young minister pictures to himself that he, too, will occupy some such place, that he will be the idol of thousands of people, and that he will be great, and that he will have great

influence for good, and possess everything that the good heart can wish for. All this is pictured to the young minister's mind, and it often influences him and he declares, "I am going into some great church. I am to be a great orator. I shall influence the world from that throne of power, the pulpit of Jesus Christ."

His ambition arises, and the people are ready to say to him ,"Yes, you will be in the council of state. You will be on the supreme bench. You will be one of the cabinet when Christ is king." The young minister entertains that idea. But in every case within the line of my observation, the young minister is sent down the mountain, down to the deep sea, put into a barren boat, given a rough, long oar, and told to row. Not only must he row but he meets contrary winds all the time, blowing ever against him. This history of the early apostles is repeated with every preacher who honestly goes into the Master's service.

We are under God's care, but God lets the wind blow against us. The ambitious minister often finds himself rowing all alone in some small quarter, in some little mission which cannot give him five dollars a week. But the very fact that he is there and that the

winds are contrary is evidence that Christ has sent him, and he must do as the disciples did, keep on rowing though he make no progress against the wind.

The believers were all sent by sea, but the multitude all walked along the shore, through the beautiful valleys, by the gardens of Bethsaida, and they reach Capernaum before the apostles did. "Aha!" say the worldly multitude, "He sends the disciples across this uncertain sea at this dangerous time of the year, puts them in that old boat. They row and struggle all night, while we have the opportunity to lie down in the soft climate, under the open sky, and rest amid the flowers, and then take a morning walk around to Capernaum. How much better it is not to be a servant of Christ than it is to be one! We are fed just the same as His disciples. We received just as much of the thousand loaves as His disciples, and He does not compel us to go by sea but allows us to go by the beautiful path."

The world is ever ready to say this, the while it takes the loaves and fishes. Christian civilisation could not exist without Christ and the church. Without Christ and the church, there would be no peace, no home, no civilised

society, nothing really worth living for in the community. But the public is all the time receiving the loaves and fishes and yet saying, "Just see! We get as good results from Christianity as these church people do, and we have a great deal more fun and joy in life." The multitude is going around by the shore.

Once, when in Washington, I heard an incident that interested me greatly and which strongly illustrates this thought. The men who were conspiring for Lincoln's assassination met nightly for several nights prior to the terrible deed. During this period, one of them stayed with an intimate friend in Alexandria which, as you know, is across the Potomac River from Washington. This friend thought by the other's behaviour that he was engaged in something terrible because of his nervousness, restlessness and inability to sleep, but he could not find out what it was. When, by accident, the friend discovered that the man had a particular engagement on a certain night which proved to be, though the friend did not then know it, the night for the final arrangements for the assassination, he offered to take the man across the Potomac in his boat. He knew that the current in the

Potomac was so strong just then that it must carry them far down the stream. But he was determined that his friend should not go to that place of rendezvous, whatever it was. Although he could not understand it, he determined the conspirator should not go. So at the hour appointed he met the other who intended to meet Booth in Washington, took him in the boat and started to row. He gave a pair of oars to the conspirator and they rowed and rowed. But the strong current of the Potomac River carried them down and down, until at last the conspirator said, "It is too late. I cannot go where I agreed to go." And they returned home, and thus he was prevented from having a share in that terrible murder of a President of the United States.

That friend was a kind friend. He took the other out to row against the current because it was wrong for him to accomplish that which he had in mind.

The apostles were ambitious to hold high political office. It was wrong and Jesus directed them to row against the wind. But they were on a mission of good and had great confidence in Jesus' prayers, so they kept right on rowing. They knew He was up in

the mountains praying. They knew His prayers had been answered before. They had seen Him when He had commanded the wind to be still, and they did not believe He would abandon them now. They rowed and pulled, and the raging waves drove them back. There seemed to be no help at all at the time from Christ.

Five years ago, a young man in my congregation, not a member of the church, was engaged by a bank in this city as a messenger. The bank cashier said to me, "Don't give that young man any help. We are trying him. He lives on a very low salary, it is true, but don't put your hand into your pocket to give to that young man."

I felt that the young man was deserving of some help and ought to have higher pay. But the cashier said to me, "Don't do a thing for him because we are just trying him. We are going to keep him on that salary until we test his honesty out-and-out. He seems to be just the kind of a man we want, but we are going to test him first, and if he is what we think he is, he will be very rapidly promoted."

Don't give him any help now! Let him row against the wind. Let him walk down to

the bank. Let him feel the disgrace, if there is any, of being unable to dress as other young men. Let him feel that. Let him feel the temptation of accompanying, in borrowed clothes, some lady. Let him feel the temptation to go into debt for clothing. Let him feel the strain of association with companions who have more money than he. Let him feel it. Because if he resists, it will be the making of his fortune.

Christ takes His disciples and puts them through the tests and says to Providence, "Don't help them any now." We often hear people complain because they are not helped more by their church. It may be that God in His providence has left them precisely in this helpless situation, or it may be they have not improved the opportunities they had to make acquaintances, or they may be too well known. But it is always well to stop and think whether this contrary wind is sent of God and whether we ought to keep rowing against it.

A young man subscribed ten dollars for a good cause and the Sunday after he subscribed that ten dollars, he came to the one to whom he had promised it and said, "I cannot pay that ten dollars because last Monday my

pay was cut down. I can now work only on half-time."

"You are making the greatest mistake of your life," was the reply, "if because your pay was cut down, you decline to pay that to God which you have promised Him. You will need Him to help you by and by."

But the young man said, "It is the clearest kind of providential intervention. I subscribed ten dollars on Sunday and the next Monday morning my pay is cut one-half. Does not that show that God intends I shall not pay the subscription?"

The other said, "I do not think it does. I think you should keep your contract with God."

The young man made up his mind that he would, and he went to a wood-yard and worked two hours each morning and applied what he earned there toward paying his subscription. He paid the ten dollars by working in that wood-yard. With one of the men who worked alongside him there, he opened a wood-yard in Newark. Now you can see a great sign there, "Wood, Coal, Hay and Grain." He is one of the most prosperous merchants of Newark. When I heard about him, I felt like praising the Lord. Surely

God works in a mysterious way. But His disciples will be rewarded. His care does not cease.

There comes to me the thought of the time when my father cleared a great piece of his forest to the west of my mountain home. When the trees had all been leveled and dried in August, they made a fire to burn the brush and timber and clear the land for the wheat. I was placed with others as a guard during the burning. The fire raged, the wind rose unexpectedly and drove the fire into the neighbouring forest owned by other people. We all began to fight that raging fire. I was at the head of a great cliff of rock and was fighting the fire by beating it with green brush as I had been instructed to do.

Suddenly my father was told I was up there on that ledge of rock and that I was entirely surrounded by the fire, though I knew it not, as the circle of fire was yet some distance away.

My father was one of those cold, steady men who seldom ever express their affection by caresses or words, or otherwise than by a generous provision for those they love. My heart had been for a year or more rebelling

against my father, and I had determined to run away from my secluded mountain home that I might see something of the world.

He heard I was in real danger and he ran around through the woodland and then through the forest fire. I remember the terrific shock when my father's strong hands seized my shoulders from behind and dragged me back with a suddenness that nearly took my breath and shouted, "Russell, you are surrounded by the fire." My father caught me up in his arms. I was a large boy and I never supposed he could carry me. But he caught me up as he would a child, and carried me up that hillside, and climbed those boulders and rocks. He came to the smoke and blaze of the burning forest and plunged through it. I remember striking the trees from time to time as he carried me on in the suffocating smoke. On we pressed. A moment seemed an hour. At last he reached an open place beyond the fire. Then he rolled me over in the leaves and covered me with the damp dirt in order to put out the fire that had caught my clothing. Then he turned to himself and extinguished the fire that was blazing in his own hair. That incident brought my father right into my soul. No

one could tempt me to disobey him. No one could persuade me ever to abandon my home or ever to do anything that I knew would hurt his feelings. The contrary wind forced us together.

When I sat on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, I thought of Christ walking on the sea and meeting His disciples on that dark and stormy night. What would you give to have been there! What could compensate for the loss if you were not there! Oh, yes, the multitude could walk to Capernaum along the shore easily. They could rest among the flowers and could reach the place ahead of Christ. To them Jesus said, "Ye are here, not because ye believe in me, but because of the loaves and fishes. But here are my disciples. They have rowed against the contrary winds. I know now they believe in me. They are not serving me for the loaves and fishes. They truly love me."

Go to Peter who tried to walk upon the water that night to meet the Christ and say to him, "Don't you wish you had stayed upon the land, and had walked around with the multitudes?" "No, no!" Peter would say. You would ask him, "Did you not have a dangerous journey? Were you not afraid?

Did you not have to row hard for nine hours and strain your muscles?"

"Yes," he would reply. "But my muscles are the stronger for the rowing, my mind clearer for the pulling, my soul braver for the experience. And oh! Not only that! I saw Christ walking on the sea to me. To see Him coming to me there was worth more than storms could offset, worth more than all else that has been given to me in life. The wind against which I pulled so hard has brought Christ to me."

Are you rowing against contrary winds, my brother? Row on. Christ will also come to you across the sea.

IX

LOVE THAT SMITES

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you."—Exodus 20: 20.

ALTHOUGH I do not believe there would have been any suffering in the world if there had not been sin, yet it is far from the teaching of Scripture to say that all suffering is a consequence of the sufferer's ill doing. For it is not. A great deal of the pain, a great many of the disappointments of life, come to us because, as Moses said, "God is come to prove you." When the Lord commanded Abraham to take his son up to the mountain and offer him as a sacrifice, He did it to prove him. Just so He hath brought to you a great many difficulties, pains and sorrows, not in consequence of any sin, but because He is proving you. He is testing you. He is fitting you for something far better than that which you now occupy.

That magnificent poem of Job, that wonderful creation, that exposition of the gospel truth in which Job's history is given, was evi-

dently written for the purpose of presenting this very idea. Job had not committed any special sin. Job had not been a man of unusual weakness. Yet affliction came to him. When he met with loss of property and the loss of friends, with the loss of his health and the loss of his family one after another, and he was brought as low as one could possibly be brought, he still said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in him." But when he passed through all that patiently, he received more at the end than he had at the beginning.

The history of Joseph is brought down to us with this lesson in it, that after he was sent into a foreign land, after he became a slave, after he was reduced to prison, he learned that every one of these afflictions was a blessing. He suffered not because of any crime he had committed, but because God had a greater work for him to do in the future for which these things would especially fit him.

When I was a boy, we used to run races. I remember the old gentleman who used to act as umpire, and I remember his telling the boys to get a good start, to go back a little way and get a good start. I remember his distinctly urging me to get back a little farther, and when I went back he said, "Go

back a little farther," until I refused to take another back step. But my companion, James, went back a little farther, and then James came in first, of course, and won the prize. God often drives men back from loss to loss, and loss to loss, or urges them back until they say, "Enough! Enough! Am I not far enough back now?" Yet God is preparing them to win the prize.

There was a boy born in 1847 in the little town of Milan, Ohio, through which was a canal, which seems to be the only thing which distinguished the town in that day. He was born with no great advantages by way of pedigree, though nothing to be despised. He was born without inheriting wealth, and when he was quite a young boy, he determined, if possible, to be an inventor.

The first thing he did was to experiment as an incubator and it was an unfortunate experiment, for his trying that experiment with hen's eggs brought him one of the most fearful whippings of his life. When he was twelve years of age, he was set to work as a newsboy on the Grand Trunk Railway trains, and he again said, "Well, I will try to be an inventor." In one of the cars, he obtained the privilege of working, and he decided to

start a railway newspaper. He secured some old type and set up a little periodical in the express car. He was greatly delighted with his enterprise as an editor, until one day the engineer stopped the train very suddenly and a bottle of phosphorus fell to the floor and set fire to the car. In great confusion the conductor ran into the car and demanded who it was that had been putting things in there. And when he found the little boy who did it, he ruthlessly kicked the boy and the materials out of the car.

This inventive genius resolved that he would try it again in another form, and he secured another place and set up another newspaper which he called "Paul Pry." In this paper, he put the gossip about the trains, conductors and such matter. One day he put in it something that offended one of the officials, and when this citizen met him on the banks of the St. Charles River, the man angrily plunged him into the river. He then stopped publishing "Paul Pry." Discouraged again, he was driven back, driven back, driven back. One day at St. Clement's station, he saved the life of the station master's little boy. The father of the child expressed his gratitude by teaching the boy telegraphy.

But when he had learned how to telegraph, he was often out of work. He went from one place to another, and in one instance walked one hundred miles seeking employment. He wandered to Cincinnati, to Boston, and finally to New York. This poor man, afflicted by providence, had done nothing for which he was being punished, not that his life may have been sinless; but when he reached New York, friendless, almost penniless, for three weeks walking up and down the streets, going from store to store and from office to office, and finding no work, was he not now reduced to the lowest verge? Not yet. There came the time when he had paid out his last penny for food. Now, hungry, he walked up Broadway, and if you had looked at him you would have said, "God has turned against him. He is being punished now for sin." He was hungry, oh, so hungry! No dinner! No prospect of any supper! He turned into the Gold Reporting Telegraph Office, thinking he would ask whether there was not some light job at which he might earn a supper. He went in. There were a number of people gathered around a telegraph machine. It did not work. As he looked at it, he suggested how it could be repaired, and

as he seemed to understand the work, they finally permitted him to go to work on the machine and put it in order. He had at last reached the bottom. For then, they set him at work fixing other machines at a very small salary, and then he was placed in charge of more important repair work, until today, the Wizard of Menlo Park sends forth his electric light and wonderful inventions all over the world. Now his name is a household word. Yet when thus sent down, down, God was thrusting him down that he might get his shoulder under the great burden of modern civilisation. It is easy enough and clear enough for us to understand it now, if we look at it in the light of God's subsequent providence.

There was a woman born, in 1750, of poor parents in Hanover, Germany, and her early years were spent in knitting stockings. As she was knitting these stockings, she wondered why God had left her in such a situation. Then when she had secured an opportunity to learn music, the typhoid fever laid her low for many months. The family found themselves in debt and she was obliged, when she recovered, to go out to the meanest drudgery of household work. Had she com-

mitted some sin? That was suggested to her and it impressed her all her life with the sense of God's unkindness. When she was seventeen, her father died, and she was left alone. Her brother, who had gone to England, sent for her to come over and be his housekeeper. She went and took care of a large family where she did all the work. The hope of marriage for herself, the hopes such as her young womanhood had pictured for herself, all faded away. At thirty-five, she drudged at the meanest and hardest kind of housework. Was God against her? She might have thought so, if she had stopped to think at all. But when her brother began to turn his attention very seriously to matters of science and began to need her ready fingers and quick brain, he called her to his assistance. He gave her a desk in his office, and then day by day and year by year, she used the telescope herself and scanned the stars until she saw what others had never discovered, until double gold medals came to her from the highest scientific societies of the earth, until her name, too, became an honoured name throughout the world, as God's mighty creation revealed itself through her teachings as never before. Ah! Caroline Herschel was thrust back, not

because of sin, but because of the divine revelation she was to make.

In 1822 there was born in this country a boy, unobserved, unnoticed, except by a few neighbours. His first cry was heard in a very small and poor household. I see him as a boy working very hard in that day, as a boy on a farm, earning but very little, sometimes but six cents a week. I see him at a spelling bee, and he is the very first one "spelled down" because he is so dull. The whole schoolhouse roars with laughter, as he goes down the very first one in the spelling contest. And as that laughter echoes upward, he, blushing with shame and with burning cheeks, seizes his hat and rushes out, feeling heart-broken at his defeat.

In that same hour, down in a southern land, there was born in the world a coloured boy. His cry was unheeded but by a few. His life was to be that of a slave. And yet on the night when this white boy was defeated, up where the two events were read together, there was a union of purpose that man could not see or understand. And when this white boy was eighteen years of age, he was poor and was sent into what is called the "beam house" in a tannery. It was the hardest and

most filthy work done in a tannery. On the day he goes there, down in a southern city upon an execution block is put up that coloured boy. "How much for this little boy? How much for this human life?" He is sold for a few dollars. Is there any connection between the two? Yes, up in heaven where the lives of both are known, the two come together. There is a strong connection between the two. The white young man is thrust downward, downward, downward; and yet there is a clear connection between his being thrust downward and the cry of the oppressed.

I see him again at West Point, where he has not distinguished himself, where he has been very slow and very dull. I see him going out almost unobserved and unnoticed into military life in Texas. This man goes forth to Mexico, and after the war he is sent up the Pacific Coast, away north of San Francisco. He is so discouraged that he takes once to drink. He drinks more than he should. He is disobedient to orders. The commanding officers say, "You must resign or be dismissed from the service." He resigns. With the sadness of that experience and disappointment, he goes home by way of

the Isthmus to New York, and reaches New York almost penniless. But a sutler who ran away from the Pacific Coast owed him sixteen hundred dollars, so the penniless captain borrows money to go to Lowell, Massachusetts, to look up the sutler. But he finds that the sutler has wasted his money and is also penniless. He comes back to New York and walks hopelessly up and down the streets of that great city, as many other of the great men of the world have done. Way down, now, far, far down! Thrust down in consequence of sin in one direction; but in the great plan, in consequence of that which he has to be!

He borrows money from a stranger here, and that stranger, years after, presented him with several thousand dollars more. That was a sad experience. But while he was here so poor, there in the South, they were selling children, separating sister from brother, the wife from the husband, one sent to Georgia, one to Alabama. The captain in poverty, living on borrowed money, sees no adequate reason for all his sufferings. But he works his way to his friends in St. Louis and there his father-in-law gives him a sixty-acre farm. He attempts to cultivate that farm. He finds that he cannot profitably raise potatoes, beans

or corn, and that neither wheat, rye, nor onions will grow and so he decides to cut all the wood from the farm and sell it. I see him now, driving into St. Louis, working for a dollar and a half a day. I see him thrusting those logs into the cellar windows. Down to where for a dollar and a half, he spends a whole day at hard work! Actually in rags and working until half past ten at night to care for the animals after he gets home! Down, far down! Is this because of sin? No, it is because slaves are being sold. The cry of the imprisoned is going up to heaven, and he is being fitted for greater work. Suppose he had turned then? Suppose he had rebelled then? Suppose he had not, with customary patience, been resigned to it?

Then I find him, when his farm is useless, going into the real estate business. That, too, is a failure. Then I find him going into politics. He is defeated for the only office for which he is a candidate. I find him an applicant for a place in the custom house. But he does not get it. He thought he had secured it one day but it was given to a more favoured applicant. When that disappointed man went home to his hopeful wife, he said to her, "The whole world is against me.

There seems to be nothing for me to do. I will sit down and write to your father and ask him if there is anything in the world I can do to get any money. I wish he would give me a chance to earn my living." Away down now to the very bottom! But slavery still grew. He writes to his father-in-law. The father-in-law gives him a place in a tannery and he works for a few dollars a week in Galena, Ohio.

And down South, slavery spread farther and farther. The coloured boy had become a man and an orator, calling for liberty. The great national disgrace of our land was seemingly triumphant, and the world looked upon us and said, "That flag which should cover the land of the free and the home of the brave, hears the clanking of the chains of the slaves, and looks down on the terribly oppressed."

Now look back upon history and see this man again as he silently stands before great Vicksburg, in command of a mighty army, opposed to thirty thousand men behind strong works. I see him there as he reads that dispatch from Pemberton and makes the reply, "Nothing but unconditional surrender." See him when Pemberton hesitates, insisting with all his firmness, "Nothing but unconditional

surrender." Then the next day, see the flags of white as they come along upon every parapet, see the Stars and Stripes as they fly to the wind on every side. Hear the shouts of the soldiers, the playing of the bands, and see the rushing of the army into the open gates. The greatest fortress of the enemy is taken, and the Fourth of July is celebrated at the fall of Vicksburg as never before and never since in the history of man.

Put the two things together now. He was thrust down, down, down, down. Poor, forsaken, hungry, disgraced! Could he be any lower? What for? That he might begin there and be the saviour of his nation, and that the awful traffic in human chattels might cease.

Do you think you are suffering now because you have committed wrong? Study your history. If it is for wrong, repent. If you see no wrong for which you are suffering, as sure as God sitteth on His throne, as sure as there is any truth in God's declarations, He is simply proving you as He proved General Grant. He is thrusting you down, down, down. Go willingly where He says to go, and the day will come when you will turn back to be the saviour of your nation, or be

blessed beyond any present compare. For he who trusts in God and receives disappointment and pain with resignation, and awaits His time, hath with him the true spirit that makes a grand man and a true Christian.

X

THE RACE FOR LIFE

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."—HEBREWS 12:2.

THE matchless orator in this and the preceding verse presents a scene in the arena when the naked, trained athletes are in the midst of an excited race. Every weight, even to the locks of hair and the length of finger nails, has been reduced to the smallest possible limit. Months of vigilant exercise have enlarged the muscles and reduced the fat. Long abstemiousness and careful attention to sleep, food and exercise have brought the whole system up to the highest physical perfection.

One of the runners seems to fly over the hard circus. His eyes dilate and shine as he passes his competitors, his muscles stand out like iron ribs beneath the skin, his veins mark their outlines distinctly on face and breast. Tier on tier, the galleries crowded with excited spectators, rise, and the gilded and gorgeously draped boxes glitter with the ban-

ners and waving 'kerchiefs of the aristocracy. Music mingles with deafening shouts, calls and cries which shake the earth with clamour fill the amphitheatre, and roll up to the sky. The race is near its end. Crowded upon by strong competitors, he has turned the stake. The goal is before him. The red post is in sight. It is the last great test. All now depends upon his keeping his eyes fixed on that red sign. The variation of one foot from the straight line will bring defeat by increasing the distance. One misstep, one instant of distraction, one second of relaxation of his muscles, and the prize is lost. One single glance at the crowds, or at his competitors, or in the least aside from that single point will disturb his concentration of physical power. No jostling of the excited racers, no screams of wild friends, no groans of enemies, no blare of trumpets, no waving of banners, no bleeding feet, no dripping sweat, no stinging revolt of overwrought cords, lungs or heart, can have a thought. The whole mental being is focussed on that red goal. His soul is in his eyes. His eyes are centered, transfixed, upon that post. He is livid. The sand flies from his bloody feet. His competitors press more and more closely. Their heated breath whistles into

cries as they strain for the prize. But his eye is kept direct. His feet and muscles obey his soul. He nears the post. He stretches out his hand. He touches the goal and darts headlong to the earth beyond with his co-racers tumbling on and over him. Hasten to him, ye lictors! Carry him into the bath, anoint his body, swathe his feet, put on him the king's robe! Lead him out before the impatient multitude! Let wise old age, feminine beauty, and princes vie with each other in excited demonstrations of joy, as the victor's head is crowned with laurel, and the parchment of his adoption as the child of the nation is placed in his hand.

The apostle had often witnessed such a race in a land and time when such races were for the encouragement of physical culture and not for the profit of professional gamblers. It furnished a powerful illustration, and he used it with such effect that it is still enforcing truth nineteen hundred years later.

The incident enforces the truth of the statement which all believe but few practice, that he who would excel in any undertaking must concentrate upon a single aim. This thought seems to have been expressed by this apostle when he said, "This one thing I do, forgetting

those things which are behind, I press toward the mark."

The young man who is ambitious to be an orator sets before his mind some ideal speaker and presses on toward the same excellence. If his hope is to occupy a station like that of Demosthenes in Greece, he sets that character clearly before his eye. He disciplines his utterance and enlarges his store of information with the one object in view. He reads of Demosthenes, ponders on Demosthenes, and acts like Demosthenes. That ideal held above all others holds his centered attention until the land is moved by a second Demosthenes. He who runs that race, keeping his eyes steadily on the goal, will be crowned a victor. It is a necessity in these times, when ordinary men know much of oratory, that the ambitious student should have an ideal and pursue it with all his intellectual and physical might, looking unto that goal, allowing no circumstances to distract his concentrated attention.

There is now a wide-spread smattering of science, and the masses of men know something of recent discoveries and of newly-traced laws of nature. People whose eyes wander from one object to another and who consequently excel in nothing may learn

something of zoology, anthropology, ornithology, geology, or astronomy. But the victor for whom mankind reserves its applause will always be he who runs one race for one prize, and goes into special training for that one contest. The undiscovered truths which mankind need so much to understand will not be revealed to one whose eye wavers. His whole life and sole ambition must focus on the one idea, and he must so run that he may win. We all know that this is the truth, but we need to have it repeated over and over that the idea may ripen into action.

The lawyer, teacher, minister, mechanic, doctor, inventor, farmer, merchant, writer, housekeeper, gentleman, or lady, cannot gain a foremost place anywhere in these days when work far outweighs genius, unless each sets up a standard in advance of the common achievement and then keeps his eyes steadily upon it as he runs the race of life. There will be strong temptation while running in the arena to stop to hear the music, or examine the banners, or rest the weary body. There will be many moments when there will be a strong inclination to give one glance aside to feminine beauty, to praising friends or scorn-

ful enemies. But such glances are fatal to the racer. Others who keep looking unto the red post will carry off the laurel and receive the applause. Every man and woman should have one overruling ambition in this life and allow nothing to divert him or her from its pursuit. This is an old and commonplace truth but it is seldom carried fully out into practical life.

In the life of a converted man, there is but one ideal. That is Christ. There cannot be found a higher, nor is there any other. He who strives for a crown in that race must keep his eye on Jesus. Anything which disturbs his vision or diverts him from a straight line is a hindrance and a curse. The race cannot be won with any sinful weights about him, nor with the pomp and enticements of the world along the course holding his attention.

One of the great hindrances to the race of the Christian is his love of temporary display. Proud of his clothes, his servants, his gold and silver, he clings to them even when he knows that they will defeat him in the race. Some are more vain of their neckties or of their automobiles than they are of themselves, and often have reason to exercise that discrimination. But the true Christian should

take pride only in a character which is Christ-like, and give not a wistful glance at the vain-glory of this present world.

The weights which, like long robes, anklets and gold chains, hinder our racing, are the sinful habits which bind our spiritual limbs. Swearing, licentiousness, spendthriftiness, ill-temper, selfishness, drink, laziness, dishonesty, must all be thrown away. It is useless to run with them on our backs or clogging our feet. Throw them all off. Look to Jesus. Start free. If you are not running well, if you are stumbling and labouring unnecessarily, carrying useless loads, begin once more. Throw away everything that is not like Christ. Look only unto Him. Physical or moral defects which hinder you in doing your duty must be corrected. We have many of them. Let us go into discipline now.

Don't stop to criticise the race-course. It may be of clay, or sand, or dust. It may be in a circle, or elliptical. The surroundings may not be to your choice. But with your attention fixed on Christ, you will not be affected by them. You may be poor, or you may be rich. You may be in robust health. But it does not matter so much to one whose life is hid with Christ. The path you are com-

pelled to take in the race is not of your choosing. If you are running direct to Jesus, that fact weighs with the Great Judge. If you are poor, or sick, or forsaken, or ignorant, or abused, look unto Jesus. Put your whole soul into the look, and run. Forget the path. Become unconscious of the bleeding feet. Run with joy, though the track be marked with blood.

All kinds of advice will be given you, taunts and hisses from open enemies, and deceitful suggestions by wicked acquaintances. Many will jeer as you run, ridicule your gait, and hoot at your naked deformities. Hundreds will tempt you to stop, and others offer you pay to leave the track, while but a few will shout, "Go on! Go on! Bravo!" Every Christian must expect this. It is a part of the race. But keep your eye on the cross and run with patience the race set before you.

The Christian's course, unlike the Roman contest, becomes easier as he goes on. Each step increases the racer's strength, and each stride nearer the goal makes it more attractive. The hisses and groans become fainter, the jeers and ridicule are lost in cheers, and the voices of encouragement from those with

the King who have run the race are more and more distinct. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," let us not be distracted even by the angels but keep our eyes on Jesus.

Look unto Jesus, ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved! Look unto the most magnificent figure in all of the scenes of history! Towering above the ruins of cities and the wrecks of nations, growing more and more lofty, and filling the whole earth, is the figure of Jesus. Look unto Him, the most beautiful vision ever witnessed! John on Patmos caught glimpses of the throne and Him that sat thereon. Keep your eye on that spot till He shall shine forth in His most excellent glory. Nothing in earth or sky is so beautiful.

Look unto Him, ye lame and blind! The look will give you power to run. Look unto Him, ye slaves of sinful habit! The look will give you Samson's power. Look unto Him, ye who dwell in spiritual prisons! The look will give you the force to break down the doors of your dungeons. Look unto Him, ye who feel the weakening pain of great sorrow! One look from Him will give you hope. Look unto Him, ye who would so run as to encourage your loved ones to undertake the

race. One look into His sweet face will double the power of your love.

Look unto Him, ye dying ones, as you near the precious goal. Think of the crown and the adoption, the acclaim of all the cloud of witnesses, and the smile of your God!

THE END

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